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Vol. 9 - #4 - Issue 52 - June/July 2013

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SNFU

Interview by Jenna Talia

32 years since their initial formation, over 5000 shows, 3 hiatuses, 25 or so members, 9 full-length records, and several EPs Canada's S.N.F.U. are at it again. Almost ten years after the last record and

the departure of founding member Marc Belke in 2005, a new record has emerged. In the last few years since the reformation of the group, a documentary about frontman Mr Chi Pig, documenting his struggles with mental illness and addiction has come out, as well as a book chronicling the band's history. Sticking to their seven-word album titles, the new one is called "Never Trouble Trouble, Until Trouble Troubles You", and is set to be released this September on Cruzar Media. Absolute Underground caught up with guitarist Ken "Goonie" Fleming while he prepares to return from Japan to do a western Canadian tour this July.

Absolute Underground: After almost ten years without any new material from SNFU, did you guys feel pressure for such a highly anticipated record?

Ken Flemming: Well, the response to that would be yes, there was great pressure on myself personally because on the last record Marc's guitar playing is killer, and the songwriting was brilliant. So that being said, it pushed the band

and me to write and record something that was great, and well-planned.

AU: Who did you record with?

KF: We recorded with Steve Loree, of the Junior Gone Wild Boys. He's a great producer that's done records for Corb Lund, Axis of Advance, The Real Mckenzie's, Ian Tyson, and many more. His approach to this record was brilliant in terms of the live energy, no over-dub, dated crap sound; it brought a fresh energy and intensity to all our songs. All in all, Steve is awesome at what he does and I just let him do what he does, which in result is a great S.N.F.U record.

AU: Over the years, this band has had 20 some-odd members, and an amazing catalog to draw from. What's the current band?

KF: The current band is Chi Pig, Sean Colig, John Card, Ken Fleming, and Jimmy Krunk. Since the reformation of this, it feels the most relaxed and chill, "just rock out have a good time together". And we write great songs together, there is a great chemistry to us being in a room together, this is key.

AU: Mr Chi Pig is one of punk rock's most unforgettable characters; he's had a well-documented tumultuous life, how does that inform his lyrics?

KF: His lyrics for this new record, in my opinion, are as good, if not better than previous records. He still has that frightening fast wit and smarts to him. You won't be disappointed, believe me.

AU: What can fans expect in future for SNFU? is this a last hooray or can we expect more music?

KF: What you can expect for the future is this band touring the world time and time again, and representing the S.N.F.U. name with respect and pride. By no means is this a last hooray, this is the first of what I think will be a string of new EPs and full-length releases to come, I'm thinking, very soon. So 'till next time, thank you Absolute Underground for your support and keep on fighting for punk rock.

Cheers, Goonie from motherfuckin' Kochi, Japan
More information at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/SNFU>



A Visit from Mr Chi Pig

February/ March 2013

By Rod Rookers

As a person who, like many Albertans, grew up skateboarding and listening to the first couple of S.N.F.U. albums relentlessly, it was a great honour to spend a whole lot of time with this punk rock legend.

I was sitting at home one day doing computer stuff like I am today when Jodie (my DV8 partner in crime) called me from the bar and told me that none other then the man himself just strolled in and wanted to hang out. I didn't know he was going to be in town, or that he was in town for the purpose of recording the vocals for S.N.F.U.'s 13th album *Never Trouble Trouble Until Trouble Troubles You*.

He came to town with Dan from Cruzar media, whom I had only met briefly

in the past (while he was delivering Absolute Underground to the bar) and Dan showed up that evening to discuss the battle plan for getting this album recorded.

They had a few options, one was seeing if they could record the vocals in the church across from Cam Noyes's place, which would probably have been tricky, or renting studio time somewhere in the area, which would have probably been a costly undertaking. I was playing it cool and was sort of listening in when I jokingly offered up the DV8 basement for the recording if they didn't mind the mess down there. Much to my surprise, Mr. Chi Pig thought it was a great idea and two days after, Steve Loree (who has recorded artists such as Corb Lund, Ian Tyson and The Real Mckenzie's) was loading in his gear... this monumental event was actually happening right in our basement. The recording process started on a Sunday and lasted until Thursday and, according to Chi, was one of the most gruelling recording

sessions he had ever done.

Steve was doing a stellar job of motivating the enigmatic vocalist and going for gold with the project and it seemed to me this was the perfect guy for the job, with a great sense of humour, a clear vision of what had to be done and plenty of patience.

Another neat thing that happened at DV8 on this visit was the decision to do some acoustic shows around town, turning a trip that was suppose to be for a few days into a trip that lasted for roughly a month and a half.

Dan played the acoustic guitar for these shows at Wunderbar, The Black Dog, Permanent Records, Slumland Theatre in Red Deer, and somewhere in Calgary, ending the mini tour at DV8 on Sunday March the 3rd.

Mr. Chi Pig was the guest of honour at our house for the entire time, crashing in our dining room (which we don't let many people do) and it was fun having him around for an extended visit. We drove around town a lot going to a few of his old haunts such as The Bulgogi House and The Double Greasy (a.k.a the Double Greeting Wonton House) and he told me a lot of stories about writing songs there in his youth and one amazing story about having Personality Crisis and D.O.A. crash at the Nosedive

one chilly winter's day in the 80s and they all went there wearing brand-new S.N.F.U. toques for lunch to stay warm. Even with the "Open Your Mouth And Say Mr. Chi Pig" Documentary and Chris Walter's amazing book, "What No One Else Wanted To Say", there is still so much to Mr. Chi Pig that he is still remains a mystery and a treasure of a human being that has sincerely done more cool shit then most people could do in four lifetimes. We talked about Personality Crisis, we talked about The Circle Jerks, he told me about playing a show with The Damned and letting The Damned share their dressing room... That was one of countless "Pig Tales" I was lucky enough to hear from Chi during his visit, and he has so many cool stories (about meeting Andy Warhol, and seeing G.G. Allin live etc...) that every lunch date was a fascinating punk rock history lesson. Another

amazing experience was rounding up the notorious Evan C. Tadpole Jones and being a fly on the wall as these two old friends and bandmates sat at DV8 and tied one on, laughing, crying and talking about old times...you can't put a price tag on an experience like that, and if the cameras were rolling it could have easily been one of the best rockumentaries ever about this amazing band. Anyway, this article is getting pretty drawn-out but, long story short, it was an honour to have Chi around for a visit, drawing pictures and writing songs at the bar and in my dining room - the man has made so much history with everything he has done in his life and if some of those tunes do make it to the studio in the future, I will fondly remember him sitting on my couch and reading them to me.

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Canvas

Interview by Michael Luis

Canvas was formed in 2011 by saxophonist Peter Ransford, vocalist/bassist Henry Luke Rachwalski, drummer Devon Venoit, and guitarist "Jimi" James Fraser. The quartet has since torn through Victoria with an energetic mix of screeching guitars and squealing woodwinds. Absolute Underground's Michael Luis sat down with the latter three members.

Absolute Underground: You guys have been described as a jam band quite a bit... When you're playing live, how much is pre-determined, and how much is improvised?

"Jimi" James Fraser: I try and keep it so like 90 percent is improvisation, other than the changes. We also have maybe one or two more solid songs.

Henry Luke Rachwalski: I would say that essentially all of what we play is improvised. We all know how the song is supposed to go, all the transitions and such, but everything in between is all improvised. We always end up going



Matthew Davies Photography 2011

down the same streets; we just fuck around on our way there.

JJF: Each song is different every time, depending where all of us are at. Plus I'm too lazy to learn something proper.

HLR: Nailed it (laughs).

AU: With such a pronounced improvisational element, how big of an influence is jazz on your sound?

JJF: Well, I grew up on jazz and Latin music. Davis, Thelonious, those guys. I'd say their influence is more on how we approach our sound, rather than the technique. Let's be honest, I'm no John Coltrane, but I like to pretend I could be. The way we interact is jazz, but the sound

we create is more of a fuck-child of everything we listen to. A rocker would call us jazz, a progger would call us rock, a jazzier would call us prog; we're confused, man.

HLR: You could call us con-fusion (laughs).

AU: Are you guys thinking of doing some recording in the near future? And if so, how do you think the "jam-y" sound will translate?

DV: I think we will end up just seeing what works and what doesn't. Some live albums are a must, I would imagine.

HLR: Yeah, we have a few songs that we could probably get down with a traditional recording approach, but for the most part it's live all the way.

JJF: If we ever get a set arrangement for the song, then it will stay that way forever. It's happened. The song can always

get better. We can always create new melodies, rhythms, and changes.

AU: What does your saxophonist Peter add to your sound?

JJF: Saxophone just generally kills it.

HLR: Dude, the sax just kills it.

DV: (Laughs) absolutely kills it.

AU: So we're all in agreement that the sax kills it?

DV: We have our own genie you could say.

JJF: A saxophone colossus.

HLR: Sax-zilla.

DV: (Laughs) sax-zilla. Yes.

AU: Another thing I've noticed about you guys is that you'll play shows with punk bands, death metal bands, funk bands, etc. What is it that allows you to share the stage with all these different groups?

VICTORIA'S LOCALS ONLY

DV: We don't judge. We literally take any gig, so it just happens that we see lots of different types of people and genres.

HLR: We're a "Yes" band. We'll never turn down an opportunity to get up and play.

JJF: All of us individually listen to different genres and styles in our own time, so I guess people can hear something they like.

HLR: Canvas is all about the musical spectrum. We have hard and heavy lows, soft and light highs, and everything in between. People dig the ride, I think.

More information at [facebook.com/explorethecanvas](https://www.facebook.com/explorethecanvas)

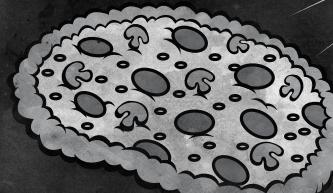
You can catch Canvas live on June 14th at Publik, and on the 22nd at The Copper Owl. Both shows in Victoria.

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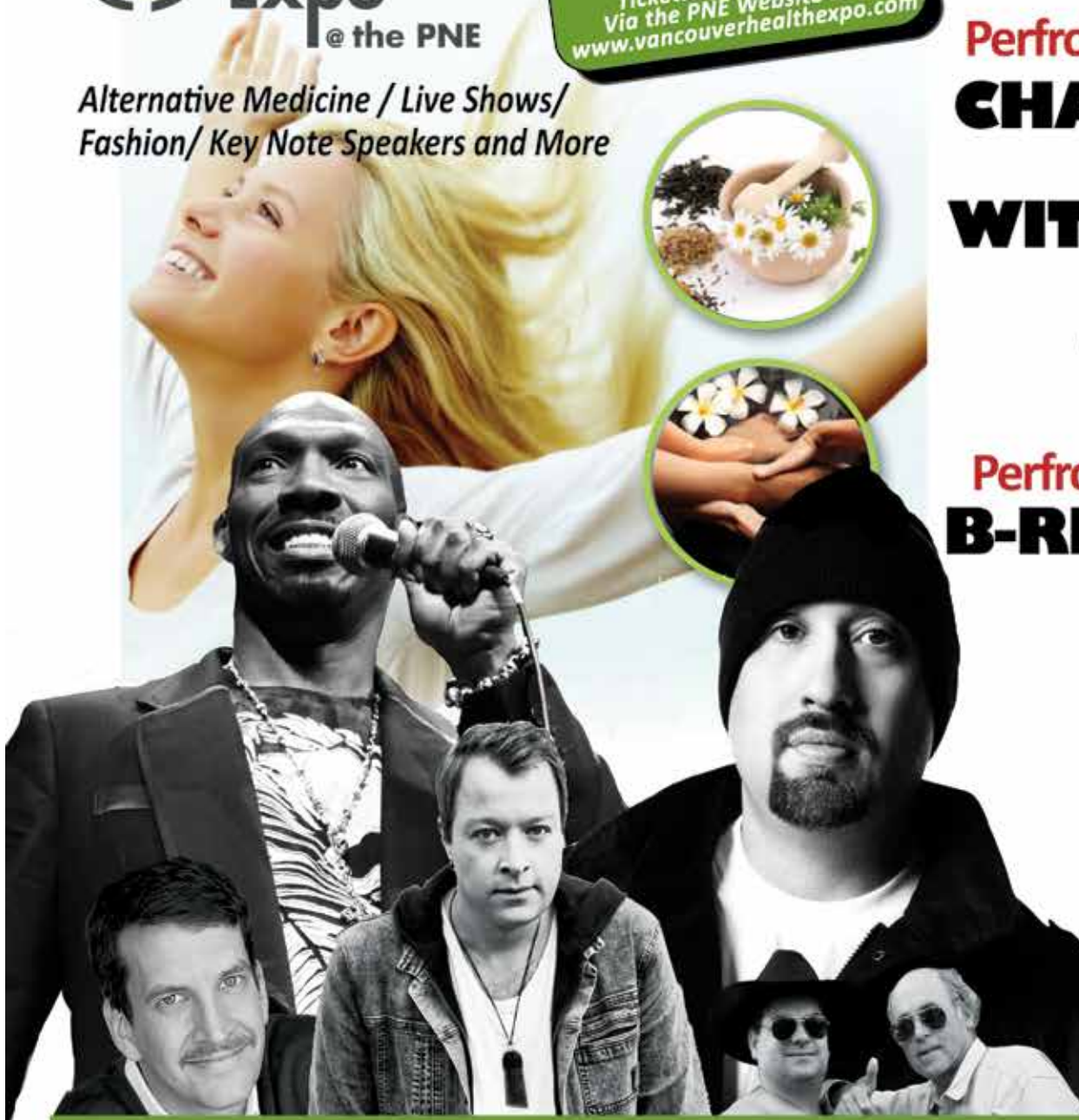
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2nd Annual Kush Cup

Interview by Sean McKay

2nd Annual Kush Cup has an all-star line up!!

Kush.ca presents an amazing late-night entertainment line up June 28, 29, and 30th as part of the 2nd Annual Kush Cup.

The Kush.ca Kush Cup is a festival like no other. Centered on the Vancouver Health Expo at the

We've had to follow all of the same protocols and restrictions...but we do owe a big thanks to the great people at the PNE ..and to the VPD for working with us and being open to the planning. The event is for approved users of medicinal marijuana. ...and there happens to be a lot of them ...and for the people that grow and maintain the status quo for the product that's grown for the hundreds of patients locally, even.

AU: What can we do to help pot be legalized?

MK: Get informed on your rights...and take action.. or move to Washington or Colorado.

AU: What does it take to be a champion pot-grower?

MK: You'll have to ask Remo the Urban Grower for that one...but we did just sweep the recent TY Expo. ...won the whole thing, every category! We had a blast...we always do! ...It takes a lot of patience and the right seeds.

AU: What can people expect from the Kush Cup?

MK: Friday, June 28th sees a special intimate performance from White Rock's own Daniel Wesley and guests at the Chapel Arts. (304 Dunlevy Ave).

We'll be cruising around to different venues throughout the city in shuttles...making pit stops along the way...including a boat cruise...check the website for all the departure times etc., Kush.ca

Then we're at the Centre for Performing Arts (777 Homer St.) Saturday, June 29th for the brilliant comedy of Charlie Murphy (Chappelle Show) and the hilarious Randy and Mr. Lahey of the Trailer Park Boys. Sunday, June 30th ..we've got hip hop legend B-Real (Cypress Hill) with City Real. Both days will be hosted by outrageous comedian and YouTube sensation, Dave Warden.

PNE, distinguished keynote speakers including the "wise quacks", and vendors will present on various integrated health and wellness topics including the benefits of medical marijuana.

The event consists of multiple venues in the downtown area including a boat cruise and evening concerts, with world-class talent including two shows at the Centre for Performing Arts. We caught up with Mark Klokeid a.k.a. "The Weed Guy" one of the master-minds behind the three-day event!

Absolute Underground: So what is the Kush Cup?

Mark Klokeid - The Kush Cup operates similar to other cannabis festivals worldwide, where many marijuana strains are judged and cups (trophies) are awarded in a number of categories at the competition.

AU: Why did you decide to create this event with a health expo?

MK: Because for us, it's really about getting the word out on marijuana being medicine for a lot of people and not a crime...and this is the right platform....we've been around and this is not a new game; they do these events all over the world...and we're just the ones doing it here! It's time... with Canada having a federal medical marijuana program and thousands of medical marijuana patients and growers and caregivers, marijuana has hit the mainstream and we wanted to support that industry...our industry!

AU: Was it hard to get the main stream involved in this idea?

MK: We've approached this like anyone doing a trade expo or convention for any other industry.



AU: Where was the most amazing place you have blazed a doob?

MK: You name it, we've done it buddy...! (laughs)

Check out www.VancouverHealthExpo.com or www.Kush.ca/KushCup for more information.



WOLFSHEEP

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Jesse Brigden Fleshworks Tattoos Victoria, BC

Absolute Underground: Introduce yourself to the people:

Jesse Brigden: Ahoy there. Well, for those who don't know me, my name is Jesse (the Tattoo Guy) Brigden. I have been tattooing since 1992, when I was 14 years old. I started the wrong way, working out of my house as a dumb kid, which was a large hindrance in my finding work/training. Eventually, at the age of 22, I found a teacher and got an apprenticeship at Unlimited Ink in Calgary with a rad old timer named Lil' Vic (R.I.P. old man). After that, I moved back to Vancouver Island, got my first shop job and have been at it ever since.

AU: What are you best known for?

JB: Probably my easy-to-talk-to demeanor

and chill nice-guy attitude (Derek calls me "Mr. Sunshine"), as well as my cartoon/comic style, bright colours and bold lines. When I'm trusted to do my own thing, some really far-out tattoos have emerged. That, and being one of the biggest Star Wars geeks around.

AU: Where are you located?

JB: I am at Fleshworks Tattoo Studio, on the beautiful West Coast, Victoria BC

AU: What makes the shop unique? How would you describe the shop's style?

JB: Our shop has a reputation for sure. Fleshworks has won nicest studio awards for a few years running. The shop is a wide open, bright, studio complete with a big screen T.V. for movies and concerts and a Koi pond. Derek, the owner, has been published in tons of magazines, has done T.V. spots and is very well known across Canada and North America in our industry. Our styles

differ a fair bit. He is very well known for his amazing Japanese style and fine line details while I do nice clean, bold, tattoos with vibrant colours. My style has really started to show over the past few years. Being in a shop where I have artistic freedom, feel inspired and am respected helps a lot.

AU: Do you think your technique, style, or skill level has changed over time?

JB: Well, for years I tried to be a jack-of-all-styles. But, as the years have gone on, I have started honing in my style. I have a hard time describing it, but I do think I stand out from many others.

You can see some of my works and say, "That's definitely a Jesse piece". It took a bit of learning humility from some other artists who were honest with me and told me where I needed to improve.



In my years, I have determined that you can always learn something new and improve your game. It took years for my style to really start to shine and I'm not done yet.

AU: Do you incorporate any secret techniques when doing a tattoo?

JB: I channel the power of the Force into my work. My techniques wouldn't be secret if I told everyone, now would they? But I definitely have a few tricks up my sleeve. One thing I will say is, thanks to some advice years back from a respected tattooist, that it is all about line-work. Take your time and make sure those lines are as clean as hell and solid. Thick and thin is the path to outstanding, easy-to-read tattoo work.

AU: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

JB: Comics, mostly. My first job as a kid in the early 90s was at a comic book shop. It really spawned an appreciation for that style of art. A few of my favourite comic/cartoon-style artists are Robert Crumb, Bill Watterson, Jim Davis, Simon Bisly, Peter Laird, Mark Texeira, Tex Avery, Bernie Wrightson, Jean Giraud (Moebius). The list goes on and on. There are numerous tattooists that I respect and draw from as well.

AU: What tattoo are you most proud of?

JB: I am proud of all of my work. It's hard to single out a few. I am, however, quite proud of this Hello Kitty Halloween leg half sleeve that I did. The collector can't go anywhere without people asking about it, where she got it, etc. I hear a lot about that one, that's for sure.

AU: What music do you listen to while tattooing?

JB: Justin Bieber, Nicki Minaj and Nickelback are a few of our shop faves. Totally joking! We put on a lot of Motely Crue, Twisted Sister, Judas Priest, Primus, Clutch, KMFDM, Ministry etc. Mostly rock/punk/metal and we also spin some old records now and then in 5.1 with the front doors open on nice days.

INK SLINGERS



AU: What's the craziest request for a tattoo you have ever gotten?

JB: Hmm, I have had a few odd requests for tattoos over the years; on the bottom of feet, faces, genitalia. This one guy wants me to do little stars on his testicles so that he has Dragonballs, haha

AU: Final words for people reading this?

JB: It's a MACHINE, not a gun. Tipping makes it hurt less. No, I won't sell you ink or needles if you are not in a shop. No, I don't do tribal or swazzys. Shop around for style, not price. Good tattoos take time and are not cheap. Finally, thank you if you made it this far into my rantings. Feel free to stop on by the studio and talk about your ideas or to just say hi. By the way, I take my coffee double-double. Cheers!



For more information, visit:

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Get Shot!

Interview by Mr. Plow

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what do you do?

J.P. Hunter: I am the frontman and founder of Get Shot! from Sacramento, California.

AU: What is sleaze rock, in your own words?

JP: We have been categorized in many different genres and sleaze rock has been one of them. We get called porno punk a lot, too. Sleazy we are, and rock 'n' roll, we are. Not sure if we are a sleaze rock band, though. Many of my influences are early punk like Cockney Rejects, New York Dolls and Dead Boys. One thing that attracted me to the punk scene 15 years ago was the chaos, angst and debauchery. I get bored at a lot of punk shows. Sure, there is the stereotypical circle pit. But many bands lack a stage performance. We try to put on a dramatic show, plus throw in graphic yet funny lyrics that would appeal to anyone that has brought home a random person they just met

at a bar. We really aren't original in concept. It just hasn't been done right in a while. But who knows, we could just really suck.

AU: What is the response like to your live show?

JP: People seriously lose all their inhibitions and let loose, more so than at most shows I have seen. Typically, there is booze spilled and thrown around everywhere and our go-go dancers help keep the guys hard while I run around and flirt relentlessly with their girlfriends. I have ripped off dance moves from Prince and Iggy Pop. Our bass player, Falko, is the Fabio of rock and seduces the ladies with his hair. We always fight over groupies after shows but recently figured out a way to screw them at the same time without touching balls or making eye contact. So our relationship has been a lot more sincere since.

AU: How do audiences react to the giant prosthetic cock you pull out on stage? Do you use it for shock value?

JP: For the most part, people love it! It's much more for fun than shock value although some people get quite offended. I always run offstage and "cock-slap" people in the crowd. Guys love it too, but I think they are jealous. It's just fun and silly. I have been told that we have helped couples improve their sex lives. I will "cum" whipped cream out of my 4 1/2 foot cock on everyone and on myself and then everyone starts licking it off of each other. Unless you are vegan, lactose intolerant or wearing clothes not suitable for a punk show, you will probably love it.

AU: You just completed a tour where you played in the red States, how was your show received?

JP: We are already booking another Mid-West tour! I was surprised by how fucking awesome these places are and even more surprised by how much they loved Get Shot! Kansas City and San Diego are equal in how hard they party. We had people having sex in the crowd, doing cocaine off the stage (sharing with us, of course), bar stools

flying across the crowd, topless girls making out... you name it!!! The Midwest definitely loves sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll and Get Shot!

AU: Do you watch lots of porn to get ideas for your songs or are they all based on personal experience?

JP: Ha! Mostly personal experience or stories I hear from friends. Plenty of people love having raunchy sex, especially in the punk rock community. We just sing about what people do and throw in dramatic humour.

AU: If Canada was willing to let you in to the country, would you tour there?

JP: Of course! The girl I'm dating has dual citizenship. I've been to St. John and Halifax for a couple days and scored some really good pot in an Irish pub. It was even more awesome because I was 19 and couldn't legally drink in the States at that age. Plus, Canadian girls are super hot.

AU: Name three things you know about Canada off the top of your head?

JP: Girls there are kinky and love anal sex, men in Nova Scotia maintain their facial hair nicely and

MR PLOWS PICK

only 13 of the 150 species of maple is native to Canada.

AU: Use this space to shamelessly plug whatever you want... Website? New CD?

JP: Well this is exciting! This summer, we will be launching the official Get Shot! Girls website. It will be an adult site with everything from bikini/lingerie pics, classy nude to dirty ass porn. It will be all original material and will also be 100% free!!! We will even be launching a section with studly tattooed boys for the ladies to rub one off to while shamelessly promoting the band. As of now, we currently use Tumblr as our porn page (www.getshotrocknroll.tumblr.com). Also, find us on Facebook. We always post amusing shit and keep our fans entertained (www.facebook.com/getshotkicksass). Our debut album, "Keepin' it Sleazy", is out on iTunes and Spotify, or you can get a hard copy on Interpunk.com. We are about to hit the studio in July and will have a second album out by fall.

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Car 87

Interview by Milton Stille
 *Answers edited for length

Absolute Underground: Alright, let's start with some band history. What was the impetus that brought you guys together to play music?

Dave: I always wanted to play music with guys who had a hardcore lifestyle, but I could not find anyone who related to me in the music scene until I met Bryce, who was thinking the same as me; old school and original. We have all gone through our addictions with horrific histories and have avoided death.

Bryce: The love of hardcore punk and being in recovery brought the band together.

Mike: Bryce and I were sick of how diluted the punk scene, and the music scene in general was becoming in Vancouver. Punk just seemed to be a new thing that hipsters used to feel cool and edgy. There was no passion, power or unity to any of it anymore.

Jay: I saw the guys perform at Funky's early last year and thought they were great. A couple months later I caught wind that they were looking

for a new bass player. I quickly learned some Car 87 songs, auditioned, and the rest fell into place.

AU: Your name references the mental health car, operated as a joint effort between the VPD and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. Would you care to tell our readers the significance behind that?

Mike: We chose it because it had a local connection, it was different than the average punk band name, and it related a lot to our reasons for playing, our own struggles, and the ideas and inspirations behind the music.

Dave: We wanted to go with the name Car 87 to carry a message to people who have addiction issues. Some people get it and others don't understand it. If you have experienced a problem due to addiction, and you like or listen to punk rock, you will get Car 87. Just listen to the lyrics!

AU: What role does the band play as far as maintaining your collective sanity goes?



VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

Bryce: Well for me, being a pretty fucked-up individual and recovering drug addict, I use the band as an outlet to let a lot of shit out and clear my head. Being in recovery and having a band is very important to me in dealing with my head, my addiction, and myself. Car 87 definitely helps me stay sane.

Mike: It helps all of us in different ways, but generally I think it's way for all of us to turn the negative things, the thoughts, struggles, depression and anger in our heads and lives into a positive and supportive force.

AU: Who's in the band, and who plays what? Am I correct in thinking that the present lineup's been pretty steady?

Mike: The band, as it is, has been steady for a while now. Bryce yells at people, Mike flails at the guitar, Jay fights with his bass and Dave destroys drums sets. We have a rule in the band that one person does one thing. No back up vocals, no second guitar. If you need another person to do the same thing that means the first isn't trying hard enough!

AU: You've made a pretty significant splash in not too long a time, with a sound firmly rooted in 80s hardcore. Biggest influences? Any influences that might surprise our readers?

Bryce: Aside from the obvious classics; Negative Approach, Poison Idea, Bl'ast, the classic 80s hardcore stuff, I listen to a lot of Leatherface, Samiam, Rites of Spring, and a lot of the more melodic hardcore stuff and Oi, which may come as a surprise.

Jay: I am a bit all over the map with influences. My key influences and roots include Helmet, Snapcase, Pennywise, Suicidal Tendencies, Every Time I Die, Beyond Possession, Minor Threat, Sick of it All, DRI, Thrice, Fugazi, and the Dead Kennedys. I like the fact we all bring our own influences to Car 87 to create a killer sound.

AU: I'm under the impression that you've done a few smaller tours, mostly locally between BC and Alberta. Any plans to do this on a larger scale?

Mike: We'd like to get out to Ontario and down the west coast as soon as we can all find the time and money; hopefully by the end of the year. We've played a lot around town and don't want to burn out the locals, so we are trying focus on playing everywhere else within a reasonable distance. Generally we are just going to keep doing what we're doing and hopefully an opportunity will come up to make a more extensive tour possible.

AU: What do you have in the way of recorded material?

Jay: We released the "Trapped" 7-inch last November, which has received some great press both locally and in the US, and we are locked and loaded to release the split 7-inch "Mirrors" with the Kroovy Rookers from Edmonton this summer. All our shit is on Bandcamp for free and we sell our vinyl at independent record stores and off the stage at shows.

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talk about the festival via email with Absolute Underground.

Absolute Underground: Could you give us a quick bio and describe your role in the local scene?

Nate Reno: I am the head Audio Engineer at Dicken's and The D. I am the Production and Stage Manager for Scarab Productions since 2008. I am also a freelance Studio Engineer and have done well over two dozen records since 2004. I founded Kilyakai in 2006. I am a founder and bass player for KYOKTYS, started in 2010.

AU: Can you give me a quick description of what Calgary Metal Fest is and why people should go?

NR: CMF is a chance to give the local scene a chance to play for Calgary! Lots of big tours come through but they don't, or rarely, showcase the local talent. CMF is the other way around, it's about showcasing the talent, PLUS we get to see some cool outta town stuff. This is some

of the best underground metal central Canada has to offer! Plus its a huge four-day party for my birthday!

AU: This year's Calgary Metal Fest has really expanded. Why did you decide to add more days and more bands?

NR: I'm a glutton for punishment! Haha, there's a lot of talent out there and a bunch of acts I tried to get last year but couldn't, so doubling up seemed the only option.

AU: Why did you decide to add larger touring acts to the fest? (Intronaut, Skeletonwitch)

NR: I wish it was a cooler story, but they just happened to be touring through on those dates and I was looking ahead far enough that I was able to book them. Tyson Cale Boyd out of Edmonton was a huge help with all of that!

Thanks dude!

AU: What were the biggest challenges last year in putting this show on? Have those same stresses carried over to this year? How do you deal with that?

NR: Lots of people ask me this question and honestly, it's not a big stress for me. Dealing with headliners is a bit of a new one, but I don't mind doing the paperwork to make that stuff happen. Due to my previous festival experience its not really hard for me to coordinate all of this. I have a great dependable crew that I trust, so that truly makes it possible.

AU: What have been the highlights of putting this festival together?

NR: Dealing with the headliners for sure, but also dealing with the sponsors. Their support has been amazing. Doing it one year before, I was able to show them what I could do and they wholeheartedly got behind me! How cool is that? Dealing with the sheer amount of bands has been cool, too. They understand the festival situation and have been accommodating.

AU: Why do you think having something like Calgary Metal Fest is important for Calgary?

NR: I think it's important just because it didn't exist three years ago. Some wanted me to call it "Natefest" or alike because of my birthday, but I was just blown away that there was no Calgary Metalfest. Again this city needs a vehicle, regardless of genre, to get together and rock the fuck out!

AU: I noticed that you made sure to include a

CALGARY CARNAGE



few nights for all ages. Why do you think this is important to include?

NR: The kids are the future! If these kids don't get to see what the ruckus is about they'll start listening to Justin Bieber. That must not happen. This is also why I tried to keep admission as low as I could for these shows. Is it a risk doing all ages for this festival? I don't think it is. There's always a bad apple, but these venues and the fest have security. So be nice and you can see all the shows kids!! If you get kicked out for being a jerk don't whine to me!! That goes for adults too!

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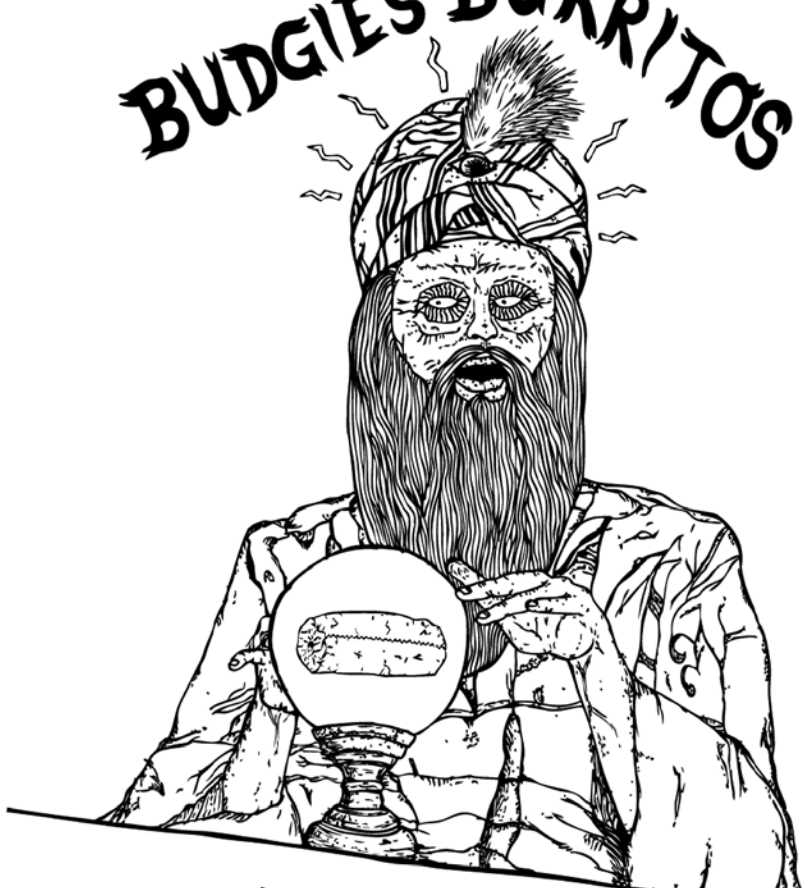
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Death Toll Rising

Interview by Allison Drinnan

* Answers edited for length

Edmonton – you have a serious reason to celebrate this summer. The Oilers may not be in the playoffs yet again, but there *is* something you can count on in your town: Edmonton's own metal veterans, Death Toll Rising, producing some of the best metal in the city for 10 years and counting. The band, featuring vocalist Jesse Berube, guitarist Drew Copland, guitarist Tylor Dory, recently added bassist Mike Puff and drummer Bryan Newbury, are stoked to celebrate their 10th anniversary with a kick-ass show on May 31st at the Pawn Shop. Copland was kind enough to answer some of Absolute Underground's questions via email.

Absolute Underground: Did you think that when you first started, that 10 years later you would still be making music together?

Drew Copland: When we started off, it was just the cliché, 'friends jamming in a garage' kinda thing, and we certainly weren't looking that far into the future, as bands need to set small, short-term goals for themselves before anything else.

AU: What are the biggest challenges you have faced as a band?

DC: Initially, the biggest challenge was: how do you go anywhere in such a small, unrecognizable scene? In the mid 2000s when we got going, Alberta had a very close and tight scene. But it was not large, and there was very little opportunity other than maybe getting some opening slots for the few tours that came through. Social media was not yet the major player it is now, so expanding your brand was difficult. Nowadays, it's a whole different game in that respect.

AU: How have you seen your sound evolve over the years?

DC: That is always a funny question, because it is hardly deliberate; it is evolution. However looking back, I can easily track that evolution. The most obvious thing for us is that the level

of musicianship is ten times what it was when we started. And that has a lot to do with the bar being raised by so many other local bands, and some non-local bands.

AU: Tell me about the way you are celebrating your 10 year anniversary.

DC: Nothing fancy, really! Just a show in our city, at our favorite venue, with a great lineup... I guess the only 'special'

thing we are doing is resurrecting a long-dead song from our past, which our long-term fans will know!

AU: How have you seen the scene grow

SHR-EDMONTON

or change in Edmonton over the 10 years together?

DC: The scene is immensely different! It used to be smaller and tighter. Fewer bands, fewer shows, but still tons of support. Extreme metal on a global level has grown (as proved by the numerous frequent festival tours, Sound of the Underground, Summer Slaughter, etc) and that reflects on local scenes as well. Now there are more bands, more venues, more shows.

AU: You haven't released material for a few years. Are you guys planning to release some soon?

DC: Yes. It has been 3 years since our last release, which is definitely longer than we had planned. We very much believe in taking the time to get things right, though. We've had snags, everything from member changes to writer's block to technical problems while recording, and we did not want any of this to affect the product. We are confident that the end result will justify the time taken, and fans will not be disappointed. No release date has been set, but we are aiming for the fall.

AU: What are the future plans for Death Toll? Do you think you will be around another 10 years?

DC: Once our album is finished, we will shop it around a bit, and see if anyone catches it. If not, we keep rolling like we always have, release it ourselves, and expand our touring radius! I would love to think that we will still be kicking it in another 10, though I shudder to think how old I'm going to be when that happens. As long as I still love it, Death Toll Rising will be around.

More information at <http://www.deathtolrising.net/>

BESIEGED

'Beer Goes In, Thrash Comes Out'
Interview by Charley Justice

Besieged are back! Who is Besieged? If you live in Winnipeg and have any kind of respectable taste in metal, you a) obviously know Besieged, and b) were pissed off as all hell a few years back when the crew called it quits, not long after the independent release of the out-of-nowhere devastating masterwork debut full-length *Victims*



Beyond All Help (which basically was, and remains, one of the most complete and accomplished nods to Beneath the Remains and Darkness Descends to emerge since the 80s...anywhere). So after months of subsequent pain and abandonment became years of a burning thrash-void in our Winnipeg metal hearts...along came the best news of 2013: *Victims Beyond All Help* is getting a long overdue official reissue, and Besieged are back from the dead, writing new material and about to eat your fucking brains with riffs and

speed. We cornered and interrogated drummer Tristan Smit in a rare moment of undivided attention between the usual onslaught of beer and thrash...

AU: Absolute Underground: Besieged rules! Good to see the name making the rounds again... Ummm...so what happened?

TS: Hey man, we appreciate the kind words. Basically, we had been playing for almost 6-7 years at that point and it was difficult to find anyone who could play what we were playing live that was fully dedicated to what we were doing, so we decided to call it quits for a while.

AU: OK. I heard you guys just spontaneously combusted from being too metal, no?

TS: Haha, yes.

AU: But you're back, and that f'n destroys! Still the beer-fueled thrash we've all come to expect?

TS: Absolutely, regardless of our time away from playing live we've always been writing riffs. We're all very excited about the new songs.

AU: New album in the works?

TS: Yep!

AU: How do the new riffs compare to *Victims Beyond All Help*?

TS: I'm not sure how they compare, exactly...I can tell you they're much more technical....but we're always going to stay true to our sound in one form or another.

AU: So new label, Unspeakable Axe...Tells us about the reissue, did how that work out?

TS: Well as far as I know, Eric from Dark Descent/Unspeakable Axe Records has been a long-time fan and contacted Nolan regarding reissuing [the album]. At the time we were already contemplating whether we wanted to start

working on new material or not, so it kind of all just fell together.

AU: Umm, Repka fuck yea!

TS: You know it.

AU: The apocalyptic future of Besieged - what does it hold...?

TS: It looks bright right now. We have big plans and we're extremely happy with our new material. We won't let you guys down.

AU: I know it's still you and Nolan (Smit), who else is on board in the new lineup

TS: Nick Tober (old bassist). We will figure out a live guitar player once we're done recording.

AU: Unabashed-genre-self-identification - go!

TS: Korn/nu-metal

AU: So thrash pretty obviously was caught up in a trend for a bit there....shorthand rebuttal...

TS: A short answer would be..."We've been around for a while", going on 10 years. We don't follow trends...if that was the case, we'd play party thrash.

AU: Favourite new record?

TS: Lil Ugly Mane - Mista Thug Isolation.

AU: Favourite classic record?

TS: The entire Thin Lizzy discography.

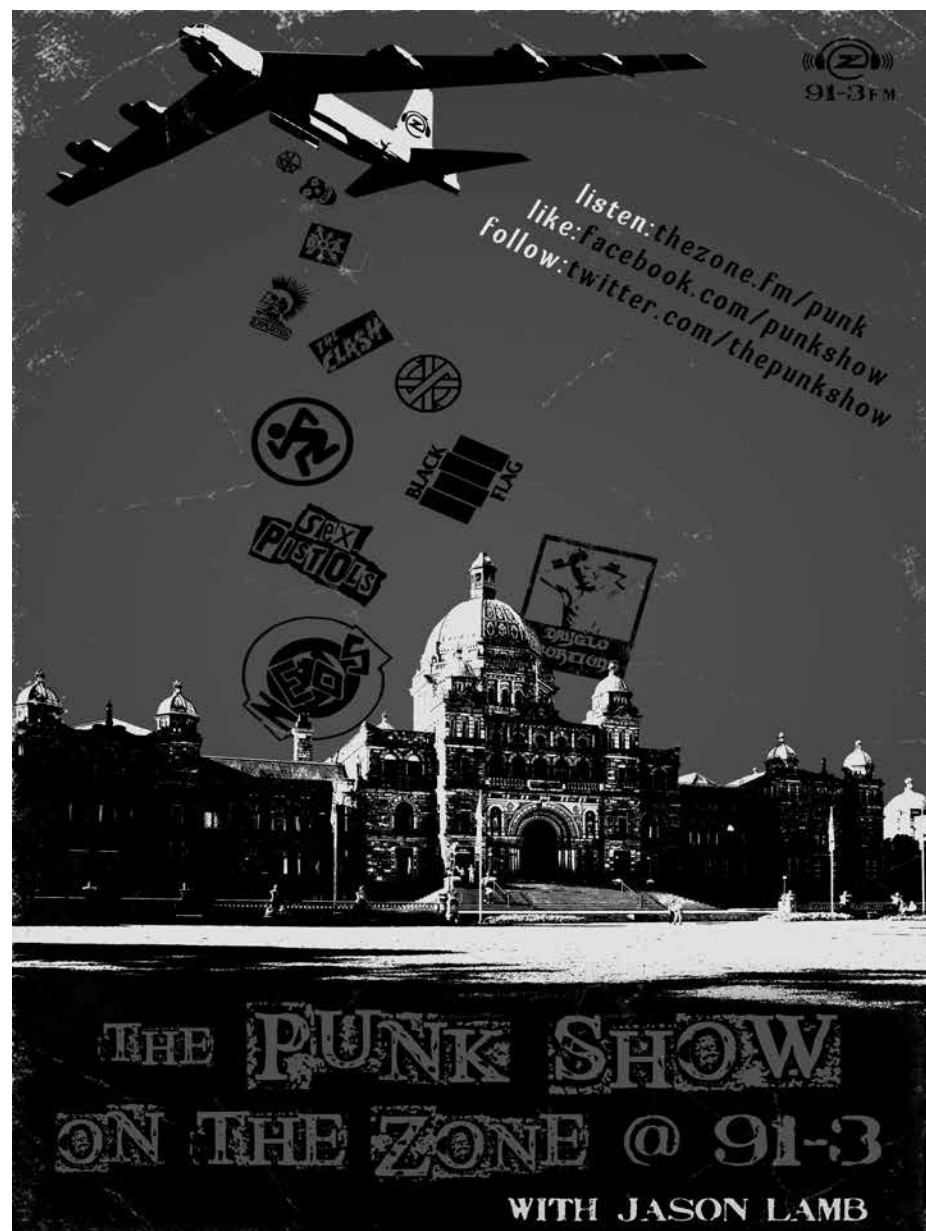
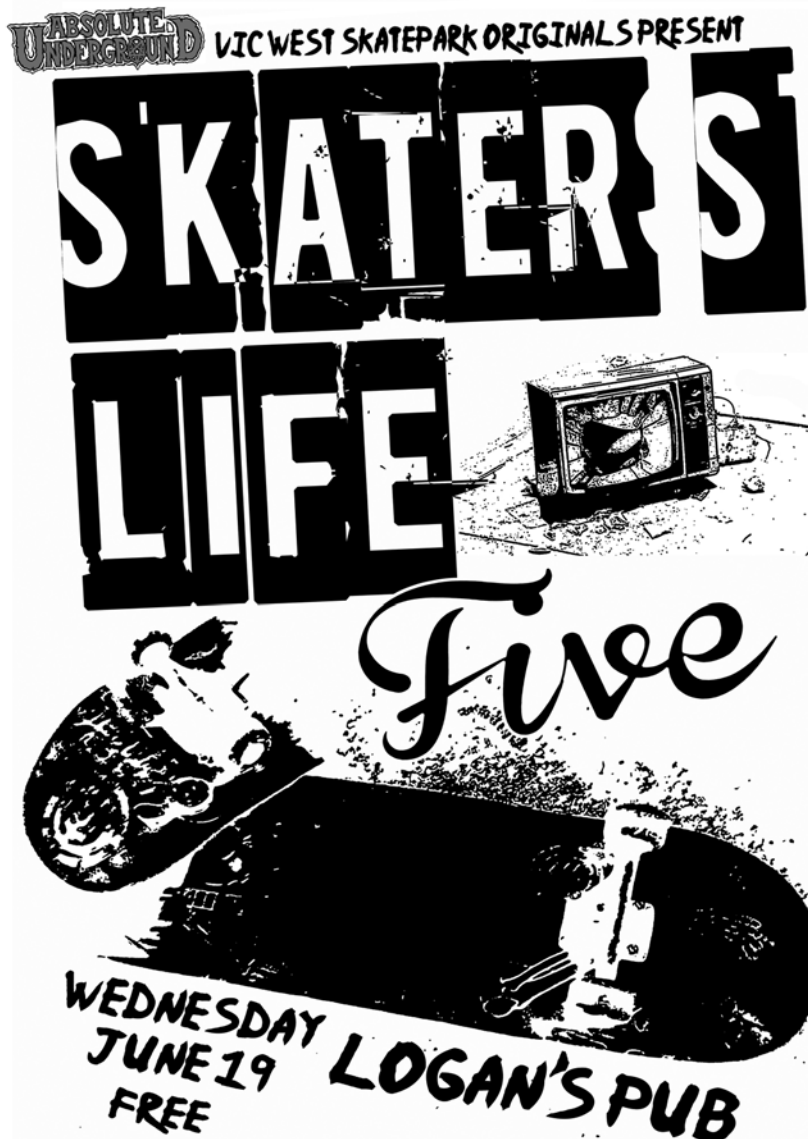
AU: Did you ever find your first album? Or are you saving it for a Kvit demo discovery release in 2025?

TS: 2025.....ha. Cheers and thanks for the questions!

WRETCHED WINNIPEG

Besieged's Victims Beyond All Help will be available on CD in July from Unspeakable Axe Records, and finally on vinyl this fall!

More information at www.myspace.com/besiegedthrash





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SHRED SESSION



Trevor Mcdermid

Interview by Matt Gordon

I recently sat down with Trevor in a smoke-filled car in a corner parking lot at the Vic West Skatepark, the situation must be right.

Absolute Underground:
What's the best thing about skating?

TM: Hanging out with friends, getting tricks and learning new tricks.

AU: What's the worst thing about skating?

TM: Stressing.

AU: Stressing is worse than bailing?

TM: Stressing is like the worst thing about skating.

AU: It's true

TM: It puts me in such a bad mood sometimes.

AU: I was trying so hard not to stress today, but I was just losing it. You weren't losing it at all today, you were cool man.

TM: I was trying to stay cool.

AU: Ya, it's hard to stay cool man. What's your favorite thing to skate, ledges, rails?

TM: I like ledges and trying to skate rails.. and tranny, I

really like tranny.

AU: When was the last time you punched someone on the bus?

TM: That one night when we were all kickin' each other and you decided to get tough on that guy...

AU: What's your favorite trick to do right now?

TM: Tail flip-outs.

AU: What's a hard day of work like?

TM: Lifting shit at Sears.

AU: What's the best hustle you have going right now?

TM: I don't know if I have any hustles.

AU: Spoken like a true

hustler. Do you like 151 rum?

TM: No, can't say I love it. It's an acquired burn.

AU: Vic West Skatepark, Great Skatepark, or the Greatest Skatepark?

TM: Great Skatepark.

AU: Have any sponsors?

TM: Coastline.

AU: Coastline Surf Shop?

TM: Yeah that's the one.

Photos by LukeConnor.ca. Also check out <http://www.yougotthat.ca/> for more local rippers.





"We wear our black fucking t-shirts on the inside!"

gym shorts and a cheap hawaiian shirt, barefooted and fall-down-drunk. It was pretty apparent that the majority of us are just straight-up getting old and that we still don't give a fuck.

Fan or not, his statement was that punk rock is not a fashion show anymore. It's a group of people who grew up during a time that is hard to recreate. It was a time of true rebellion and subculture, when things like skateboarding, denim vests and the loud, offensive music was completely unacceptable to the masses. Punk rock is an attitude, and it's apparent now more than ever,



us then is the same music that inspires us now. So what does that mean? It means not much has changed. Although the wilder days of California venues



and they witnessed legendary skateboarder and singer of The US Bombs, Duane Peters, fall off the wagon at The Gold Spike's Pool



Though there was a lot of talk about how times have changed, and how the days of the SamsTown Venue and a smaller crowd are dearly



had to say about it, whether you're one of the few dirty spiky haired kids out there, whether you're in a band or wearing a band shirt or just any old shirt



Something about that comment, from Guttermouth's lead singer Mark Adkins, rang in my head for the entire four days of Punk Rock Bowling. I mean,

that you wear your punk on the inside. Punk Rock Bowling showcased that time with justice this year. Most of the events headliners,



damage as they're capable of by today's standards at an event like PBR. They drank more than too many beers, pissed their pants, and fanned out on their

Party with TSOL. Reminding all of us who were there to witness it, just how attached the true pioneers are to this lifestyle.

missed, a group of people came together for the love of this music in a seriously special weekend of camaraderie that rarely shows it ugly face with pride anymore. Friendships founded solely on this event were reunited from across the continent, literally. Canadian, American, and Mexican punk rockers came together and ran wild in the streets, trying to give it justice just like they did back in the day.

cause you're old now, being punk is something you are born with, and something that you die with. And no matter what you choose to do or wear in-between when something like Punk Rock Bowling goes down, you get there, or you wish you did. Because although it seems like we might be a dying breed, we sure as hell aren't dead yet.

-By Alicia Gilmour
<https://punkrockbowling.com/>

So whatever you wear on the outside, despite what Adkins



what an enjoyably rowdy show to kick it off, though he was pretty vocal about being tired of this whole new wave punk rock persona. Ragging on the couple of mohawks that were there and flipping the bird to all his young black-t-shirt wearing fans, he sported a pair of mesh

like Black Flag, DEVO, Bad Religion, DRI, Turbonegro, Lagwagon, The Damned, The Casualties, Strung Out and Guttermouth, have been playing some of the same songs for the same fans for twenty and thirty plus years now. The music that inspired

aging heroes. They created new memories of debauchery and remembered those of the good old days. They got rowdy at the JAKS after-party where Victoria's Frostbacks slayed it. They partied with Mike Ness till 4 in the morning at the casino bar

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Tripp Underwood

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Tripp Underwood: Tripp from the Unseen, and I don't think I'm infamous for anything.

AU: Well, you wrote a book...

TU: I did write a book. A poorly-written one, but it's nevertheless recorded for the annals of history.

AU: Why Bowling?

TU: We were invited.

AU: And you guys are playing a show tonight?

TU: Yeah, us, The Business, Agnostic Front, and the Krum Bums.

AU: Who else are you stoked to see this weekend?

TU: Super excited to see whatever incarnation of Black Flag that's coming out. I've seen Bad Religion, if you count Warped Tours we've done together, well over 140 times but they always blow me away. I'm curious for DEVO, you know I get it, I'm not excited, but I'm curious to see it.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've ever seen at Punk Rock Bowling?

TU: We saw a guy crash his car into a brick wall and then get out and run away. Like straight-up just like, "I can't deal with this", and just get out of his totalled car and just run the fuck away.

AU: Words of advice for young bowlers?

TU: Know your limits both ball-heavy-wise and beer-wise. You know what I mean? If the ball's too heavy, you're going to hurt your shoulder; if you have too many beers, you're not as good as you think you are.



The Sofa Kings

AU: What's the name of your bowling team?

SK: We're the Sofa Kings from Las Vegas, Nevada. This is our 4th consecutive year bowling, hopefully we're going to go all the way to the top today. We're taking on the Stern Brothers this time, they took us out last year and it's time for some revenge.

AU: What is the craziest thing you've ever seen at Punk Rock Bowling?

SK: I'd have to think about that one, there's so many crazy things, I don't know if I could narrow it down to just one. I do remember though, it was last year and we were goofing off so much that when we turned around we were the last team to finish bowling, we were in like the 60th lane. We turned around and the whole bowling alley was looking at

us like, you guys are a bunch of degenerates, just finish your bowling already!

AU: Who are you most excited to see for bands and stuff this weekend?

SK: Fuckin' DEVO and FLAG and D.R.I. and T.S.O.L. and The Dirty Panties.

AU: What are people reading this at home missing out on right now?

SK: My ass while I'm bowling, from behind, that's what they're missing right now.

3 Knuckles Deep

AU: What's the name of your bowling team? KD: We're 3 Knuckles Deep

AU: What does that mean?

KD: Cause there is 3 holes in a bowling ball, it's kinda like the shocker.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've seen at Punk Rock Bowling?

KD: Wayne doing the header down the lane and us puking everywhere last year.

AU: What bands are you most stoked on seeing this year?

KD: We went and saw Guttermouth and Strung Out last night, which was fucking amazing, and we're really stoked for Me First and the Gimme Gimmes on Sunday too.

AU: Explain this event to the people who missed it.

KD: Shoulder to shoulder with people that you want to be around, and more booze than any one person could ever drink.

AU: Bowling tips for young children?

KD: I bowl better when I'm drunk, so you probably could, too.



Church of Lushotology

AU: What's your craziest Vegas Bowling story?

Church of Lushotology: Oh my god, last year we were so fucked up, I don't even remember getting on the shuttle back to the hotel, and that night before they gave me someone else's ID, so I was bowling as a French Canadian lesbian, not myself.

AU: What's the name of the team?

CL: The Sisters of the Church of Lushotology

AU: What's your team all about?

CL: Well, we're drunk, and we probably believe in drinking so we decided that we're going to go ahead and call our church the Lushotology... if Scientologists can do it, we can fuckin' drink. It's a better church.

AU: Who are you most looking forward to seeing this weekend?

CL: Oh fuck man, Bad Religion, Wanda Jackson, DEVO. Punk Rock Bowling is always a stellar time!



GutterBalls Deep

AU: What is the name of the team?

GD: GutterBalls Deep.

AU: How long have you guys been bowling?

GD: Pretty much our whole lives, we're pretty avid bowlers, we practice every day. It's a really big deal for us, every year.

AU: What are you most excited to see this weekend?

GD: I'm excited to DEVO tonight, I'm excited to see The Muffs tonight. I'm excited for the band I'm in, The Bombpops, to play on Sunday night.

AU: What are people missing out on if they're sitting around at home?

GD: They're missing out on tons of fun. Really good bowlers. Everyone should come try Punk Rock Bowling, it's fun.

AU: What is the name of your team all about?

GD: GutterBalls because we are all gutter balls, Balls Deep because you gotta go balls-deep.

AU: What's the best thing you've seen at Punk Rock Bowling?

GD: Dat ass and those boobs, yo. We saw this lady with boobs that were sticking like three feet out last night.

AU: Final words of wisdom or bowling techniques?

GD: You just have to be really talented, it's a God-given gift. If you suck at bowling, you suck at life.

Meow Men

AU: What is the name of your bowling team?

MM: The Meow Men

AU: What are you guys all about?

MM: Cats and bowling. Drugs if you have any...

AU: Is it better to bowl stoned or drunk?

MM: I would say drugs are better than not drugs.

AU: What are your thoughts on Punk Rock Bowling?

MM: We're trying to not make the second round because there's no way we want to go bowling early tomorrow morning.

AU: You're the Meow Men, you need some Meow Women.



MM: We need some Meow Babes, dude.

AU: Are you a cat person?

MM: Yeah I got a couple cats, I got a one-eyed cat at home, and I got a real loud one.

AU: What's the best thing about bowling?

MM: I dunno, what's the worst thing about bowling, what do you think?

AU: Sometimes the balls are too heavy

MM: Yeah, bowling takes a long time... are we bitching about bowling or saying good things about bowling?



Powell Peralta Rippers

AU: What's the name of your bowling team?

PP: We're called the Powell Peralta Rippers.

AU: Why bowling?

PP: Because bowling is awesome and we can do it while drunk

AU: What are you most looking forward to this weekend?

PP: Most looking forward to this right here, bowling with my friends and having a great time and seeing some great punk rock shows, gambling and doing the whole Vegas thing.

AU: Describe this event for people missing it right now.

PP: It's the best event on the planet, I love to party, I love to go to punk rock shows. If you haven't been, make sure you come next year and you'll come every year after, I guarantee that.

AU: So you guys are like a skateboarding bowling team?

PP: We're more skateboarding than bowling. Well, my team-mates are pretty good, I'm a hack. But yeah, Powell Peralta and Bones out of Santa Barbara. This is our first year bowling as a team.

AU: So what do you guys do, make skateboards, sell skateboards?

PP: Yeah we've been making skateboards since 1976 out of Santa Barbara, California. We have our own factory, where we manufacture skateboards. We're passionate about skateboarding and punk rock.

AU: Is the Bones Brigade going to have a team?

PP: I would love to see that happen, that would be epic.

AU: What bands are you most stoked on this weekend?

PP: I love Turbonegro a lot, and Lagwagon is my family. Flag should be really good... there's too many bands to go down the list but it's a who's who of Punk Rock out this weekend.

AU: Any words of wisdom on bowling



techniques?

PP: No words of wisdom on bowling because I suck, but overall just have fucking fun in your life, if you're not having fun, you're doing something wrong.

Shawn Stern

AU: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Shawn Stern: Starting Punk Rock Bowling I guess, plus Youth Brigade and BYO Records.

AU: Did you ever think that this event would get this big?

SS: I think that people like it, every year the first thing they say when it's done is, "When is the next one?" So it keeps getting bigger and bigger.

AU: What are some of your bucket list bands you'd like to see play Punk Rock Bowling?

SS: Well, I've seen most of the bands because I've been doing this for over 30 years.. you know it's funny, you never envision it as more than just a party for our friends and then it grows into this, so with the death of the record business, it's kind of a thing for us to morph into it's what we started doing with promoting and... kind of going back to our roots, I guess.

AU: What was it called, Godzilla's back in the day...

SS: Yeah, we ran Godzilla, we also did shows, we did a show at the Palladium called Youth Movement '82 that was kind of infamous.

AU: What's the craziest thing you've seen at Punk Rock Bowling?

SS: You've got a bunch of punk rockers running around in a town where you can drink 24/7. Let your imagination go, crazy shit happens.

AU: What bands are you going to definitely not going to miss checking out this year?

SS: I'm gonna see DEVO today, Weirdos, Swingin' Utters, going to check out Bad Religion and FLAG is going to be a highlight. Subhumans, I love them all. I also want to check out Tartar Control. Plus there is lots of crazy club shows as well.

AU: Any final words of wisdom or bowling tips?

SS: I just say get drunk and you'll bowl better.





The Big Bad Religion Interview

By Anita Fixx

On a cold January morning, I talked to Bad Religion member Brooks Wackerman, the drummer of Bad Religion. Let's get started, shall we?

Absolute Underground: So I'll start with your new album, what does the title "True North" mean?

Brooks Wackerman: Basically means being on the path you want to be on. Or if you're going

through different stages of your life, you want to be on the true north part, which is the optimal path. That's my interpretation of it- it's just the optimal path and discovering who you really are.

AU: So unfortunately I didn't get to go to the show last night, how was it?

BW: Show was a good time! We usually play the Kool Haus out here so it was a nice intimate setting with our fans and family. We haven't done small shows like this in a while. Nice change, and it gives us an opportunity to figure out how to play these new songs and yeah, it was all-around a good time.

AU: I wanted to ask if you guys ever imagined Bad Religion would still be around in 2013?

BW: You would have to ask one of the founding members that started the band back in 1979, because I was 2 years old. I'm still considered the

new guy even though I joined the band in 2000. But I can speak on behalf of my chums in the band and say no, they never thought they would be able to sustain the band since its inception. We've been fortunate enough to still make records and do tours after all these years. But they never set out to outlive the Rolling Stones. It was never in the cards, but here we are.

AU: And related to that, what sort of changes have you seen in the punk scene over the years?

BW: There have been quite a few changes. You have your commercial punk bands which went on to play arenas and stadiums. Which I think, if anything, has brought punk to the forefront and any fans that like the arena punk bands like to go back into time and see who their influences are. So it's pretty amazing that that there's still a punk scene after all these years.

Whether or not it's popular, there will always be a strong underground scene...I think that's where we come in. I still see people coming to our shows. So I think the genre has outlasted any popularity trend.

AU: It's still relevant and revolutionary?

BW: Yeah, I think at least in our band, what Greg sings about and Brett writes about, I think it's still relevant. And the songs they sang in 1980 still hold water and we're still fighting the good fight. Globally speaking, we can only affect a small percentage but you know, if that small percentage takes it seriously and if one person takes it seriously, then we're doing our job.

AU: And since you guys sing about social issues, what is one thing you think people could do to make a positive change in society?

BW: I'm with all the environmentalists; our

government could definitely take more action on climate change; I think there needs to be a focus on that. And anyone who doesn't believe in global warming is living in the clouds. The facts are facts and science is science. And animals going extinct and ice melting is really not a joke. So people need to get their heads out of their asses and believe that's true. I have two kids that are three years old, and I feel it's my responsibility to take action. That's one area I feel strongly about.

AU: So what are your plans as a band for the coming year?

BW: We have quite a tour, we're just scratching the surface on that. Last night was our second night. And we're gonna be on Jimmy Fallon which I'm excited about. And we're coming back to Toronto on March 31st, as you may know. Then Europe this summer and on from there. We took a year off, so we're all excited and rejuvenated. And feeling as young as we can... The band's been together for 30 years.

AU: I don't know if you want to share anything but do you have any interesting stories about tours that you've done?

BW: Every day is interesting. It's hard to hone in one incident...every day is different, you feel different, sometimes you act different. You have different experiences travelling; you're in a different hotel, city every day almost. Yeah, there's never a dull moment. It's not as glamorous as people perceive. I mean depending...if you're Motley Crue back in the day...but at the end of the day we still love doing this and it's great that people still come out to the shows. Yeah, it's crazy at times but at this stage of our lives we run a pretty tight ship. And it's good just to be around friends.

AU: So finally do you have any last words?

BW: It was fantastic coming back to Toronto and playing an intimate show... We met a lot of great people and it's cool that we're coming back March 31st with Against Me. We're just excited about the upcoming year and we're happy people like the new record. And on we go!




More information at www.badreligion.com

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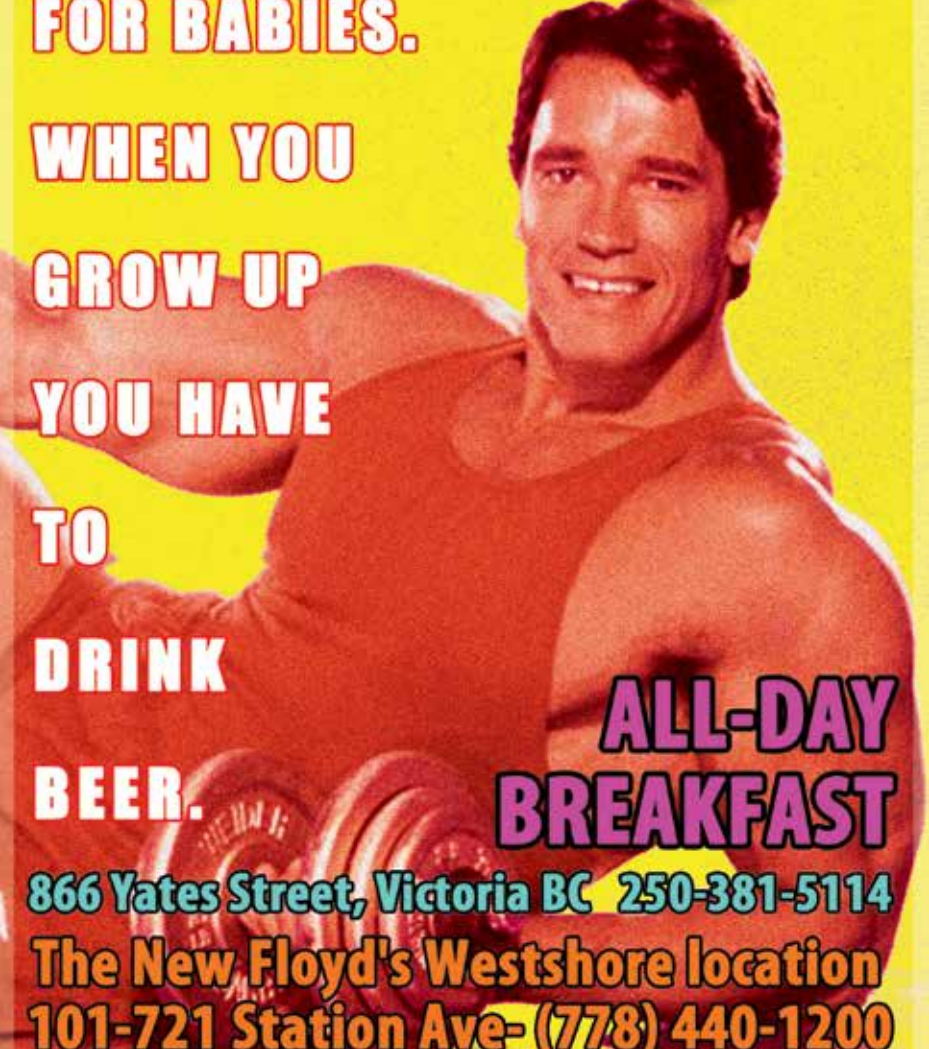
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Gorguts

Interview by Erik Lindolm

Giants of Canadian death metal emerge from hiatus

– Gorguts are back. Founder and mastermind Luc Lemay speaks to AU on what it means to record a new album, with a new label, with an unheard of concept and topic in death metal. The album remains untitled at this time in press circles, adding to the suspense and anticipation of a fresh release from a band that cares only about the music.

Absolute Underground: First, hello and thanks for taking the time. Where are you now, and what’s going on?

Luc Lemay: Well, just got home from the workshop...and listening to our new album while doing this interview!

AU: The band is signed to a new label, Season of Mist. How does a new label change your viewpoint on writing music? What are your goals with this upcoming record?

LL: The record was already all written when I got in touch with Season Of Mist. So my vision for this new record wasn't affected really by the label. It's been a very long process as far as writing is concerned. A lot of details in the arrangements, a

lot of work in the lyrics as well. I couldn't be happier with these new songs! I hope to reach new fans with this music. It's still very heavy, but yet

more progressive than the records we've made in the past. I think we're going to please a larger audience with this record. People that couldn't stand Obscura are not going to be scared by these songs. But the ones that were crazy about Obscura and From Wisdom will get their fix as well.

AU: Can you describe the record for us?

LL: The record is a journey through the world (geographically) and spirituality of Tibet. I'm also talking about the tragic fate and situation of this country. There are songs which talk about the mysticism and the beauty of their land and culture. Then, there's a turning point on the record that brings the listener to a more sad and tragic place; about their condition and the fact that their culture can disappear at any moment and the fact that the whole world feels helpless towards their situation. So, music-wise, there were many possibilities to make the compositions more descriptive, and more story-telling. The songs are longer and most of them are linked together.

AU: What was the most fun part of the recording process?

LL: First, to me, recording is the ultimate thing! I absolutely love recording! If I had to choose between live [performance] and recording, my heart would go more towards the studio experience! But don't get me wrong, I love playing live as well. So every single moment from making this record was great! We got the chance to work at Pierre Remillard's studio in Québec and at Colin's studio in NYC. So the fact [that we had to

travel] to work on the music brought something special to me. It was a new experience to do it like this.

AU: The band is known to be technical and proficient players, throughout all the lineup changes. What influences to the sound do you have today? What records are you finding influences in?

LL: I like many different styles of music, but for this record I was influenced by the work of Steven Wilson, any work from his discography. Still listening to a lot of classical music. That's all I can think of for now.



AU: Gorguts is moving into the 2010s... how does that feel, when the band started in the 1980s?

LL: It feels awesome! I'm very thankful to all the fans that kept following the band after all those years, even with the drastic style changes in our sound. But I think our fans understand that every new record will never be like the one before.

That became a trademark for Gorguts and as an artist, I'm not interested in doing the same record twice. Today, at 41, I wouldn't see myself doing anything else! I'm very happy playing METAL and expressing my creativity through this craft.

AU: Do you many bands look to you for guidance in the Quebec scene? What new bands do you enjoy?

LL: As far as guidance, not really. I like to meet musicians from younger bands and encourage them to do what they like and encourage them to push their creativity. I think it's a very noble thing to devote one's life to art.

AU: Thanks and cheers.

LL: Thank you very much for your interview! Enjoy the record.

For more information, check out www.gorguts.com/

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KEN mode

Interview by Milton Stille

Hailing from Winnipeg, Manitoba, Juno Award-winners KEN mode recently signed with Season of Mist Records for the release their fifth album, *Entrench*. Milton Stille caught up with them while they were touring in the States, a few days prior to their CD release on March 19th.

Absolute Underground: Congratulations, guys. *Venerable* was an undeniable shitkicker of a record, but it seems you may have just

outdone it with *Entrench*, quite possibly your most cohesive effort to date. How's tour going so far? How's the response to the new material been?

KEN mode: Thanks! On record, the response has been extremely positive so far! I think in the live setting people are still trying to absorb what we're dishing out. The new material is pretty fresh, and has a decent amount to process. Once people are able to take the record home, I can see a more intense response happening live. That being said, we've seen some of the first "mosh pits" in our entire career while playing this new material, 13.5 years in the making, haha.

This tour's been a ton of fun, and a ton of lonng drives so far. We're really excited to crush Western Canada with it!

AU: Speaking of touring, you seem to spend a pretty significant amount of time on the road, playing shows almost incessantly throughout North America, with the odd European run thrown in for good measure. How would you say touring is affected by being based in Winnipeg?

KM: It causes us to tack a good two weeks onto every tour just to make it out to meet up with the other bands and starts out on a lonely/odd tone, as we tend to have to hit secondary and tertiary markets, since the tour packages tend to hit all of the larger cities. That being said, being from Winnipeg makes us tougher I think; long drives don't scare us much.

AU: I found it interesting that you recorded with Matt Bayles, but did so in Winnipeg, rather than the band going to him in Seattle. Any particular reason for this?

KM: We accessed some loan programs through Manitoba Film and Music and FACTOR to fund this album, and one of the stipulations is that it's recorded in Manitoba. Matt likes traveling to do records, so it worked out nicely. We holed ourselves up in Private Ear for a nice long haul and banged out our best album to date.

AU: Between *Venerable* and *Entrench*, you've recorded with two of the most highly sought-

KEN mode

out individuals in the realm of heavy music. Any particular differences in their respective approaches you might find worth noting?

KM: It's hard to compare fully as we had about a third of the time with Kurt as we did Matt, thus giving Matt extra time to actually act as a producer, when time really didn't permit for Kurt to do so. That being said, the primary difference I noticed is that Kurt spends a lot more time crafting tones for the album, while Matt likes to start up, get mics set and immediately begin tracking. He likes the bands to sound like they would live, and focus on getting the best performance he can out of them. It was very cool to get to work with two names like these over the past 3 years, and I suppose it speaks volumes as to how our music is respected to a certain degree!

AU: How has working with Season of Mist been so far?

KM: So far it's been great! We're working with New Damage/Dine Alone Records in Canada, and Season of Mist everywhere else, and the response thus far has been very impressive. I think we made it easier for everyone having put in as much work as we have for the past 4 years specifically, but you really end up only as good as the team you're working with, and I think we have quite the army here.

AU: Okay, the inevitable question about having won a Juno: What's surprised you most in terms of what it's changed (or hasn't)? I read that you were applying for all sorts of artists'

grants in hopes having a Juno might facilitate that. Would you care to elaborate?

KM: The Juno undoubtedly was the icing on our funding cake, which I outlined previously...I don't



think we would have been able to record for as long as we did with Matt without it. In general terms, it's kind of cool that all of our promo gets to be "critically acclaimed and award winning, blah, blah, blah". I can't complain about that!

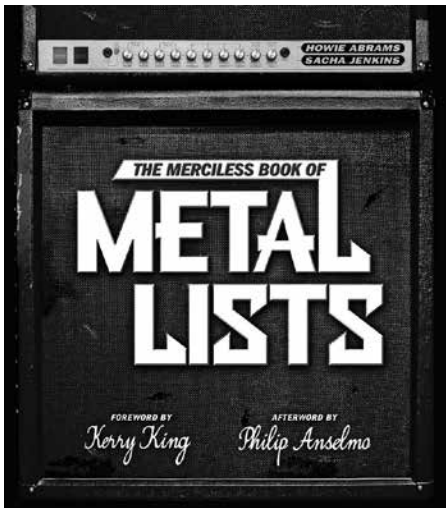
A fair number of people heard our name as a result of winning, whether they cared or not!

AU: What's next for you after this tour?

KM: Europe is next in May, then hopefully a whole bunch of crazy tours in North America and abroad to follow! 2013 is the year our machine takes over.

KEN mode will be at the Sled Island Music Festival in Calgary, Alberta, at the Ship & Anchor on June 21st and the Pitchfork Music Festival in Chicago, IL, on July 19th and 20th. More information at www.ken-mode.com

Photo Credit: Milton Stille



Howie Abrams

Co-Author of the Merciless Book of Metal Lists

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Released on April 9, 2013, The Merciless Book of Metal Lists is exactly that- a volume of lists about metal that directly addresses some of the most controversial (and hilarious) trends and topics in the metal community. Read on and see what co-author Howie Abrams has to say...

Absolute Underground: Why did you decide to write such an extensive and possibly controversial tome?

Howie Abrams: Really, for no other reason than I've always loved metal, and happen to be an extremely opinionated person, so why not throw those opinions out there for all to debate? Metalheads LOVE to argue about our music, so it seemed like a natural idea.

AU: What should we know about it as readers before we tackle it?

HA: It's clearly written for REAL metal fans, but it's not meant to be some kind of serious, educational book about the music or the history of its community. It's designed to be fun...and make people fight!!!

AU: What are your top 5 favourite lists in the book?

HA: That's a tough one. I really loved compiling the embarrassing album covers, re-visiting Rob Halford's lyrics, Dan Liker's worst trends, the hipster's guide to metal t-shirts and of course, Lemmy's Warts.

AU: What was your biggest challenge in compiling the lists for this book?

HA: Probably determining where the cut-off point was for some of the lists. It was hard to not just continue on with some of them and make them longer, but I did my best to keep everything quality over quantity. I had to remember that the only person I really needed to amuse was me, and not worry about what the people who troll message boards might think.

AU: In your opinion, what qualities does a metal band have to have to make it to the top 20?

HA: Consistent quality and impact on the scene as a whole are probably the two most important qualities.

AU: There is a list called "10 Reasons Dave Mustaine Probably Declined to Participate in This Book"... Did you actually approach him about it?

HA: We did reach out to Dave and he was the only artist to outright turn us down. Not surprising coming from Dave, so we decided to speculate as to what he had to do that was more important.

AU: Have you had any diehard fans calling you up to debate yet? What's the craziest thing that happened in the making and/or release of this book?

HA: We have a list about bands who a lot of people consider to be metal bands, that REAL fans know just aren't. It's the fans of those bands making the most noise on the message boards... being all pissed-off, as if we shit on their favourite band. It's not like we came out and said they suck.

We just don't believe the bands on that list to be true metal bands.

AU: Word on the street has it that you guys focus a lot on bands from the 70s to the 90s, and less on modern groups. Any particular reason for this?

HA: I think the 70s to the 90s were the heyday and produced the greatest bands. We definitely acknowledge a number of newer bands like Gojira, Nachtmystium... We didn't move into a cave after the year 2000.

AU: If it suits you, please indulge our curiosity with a custom list just for us!

The Personal List of A Professional Listmaker:

a) Favourite band(s)?

HA: Iron Maiden, Slayer, Bad Brains (while not Metal, they influenced EVERYTHING!)

b) Best live show ever?

HA: This is practically impossible to answer, because there are so many, but I've never seen a bad Maiden show.

c) Favourite gear?

HA: I'm a Dickies and T-shirt kinda guy

d) Favourite beer?

HA: Ommegang - Three Philosophers. Delicious and high alcohol content.

e) Home country of your favourite metal scene?

HA: Tie: U.S. and UK

f) Musician you'd magically resurrect if you could?

Ronnie James Dio. He was still great even while ill. The last Heaven & Hell shows were great and he was just incredible.

h) Favourite type of list?

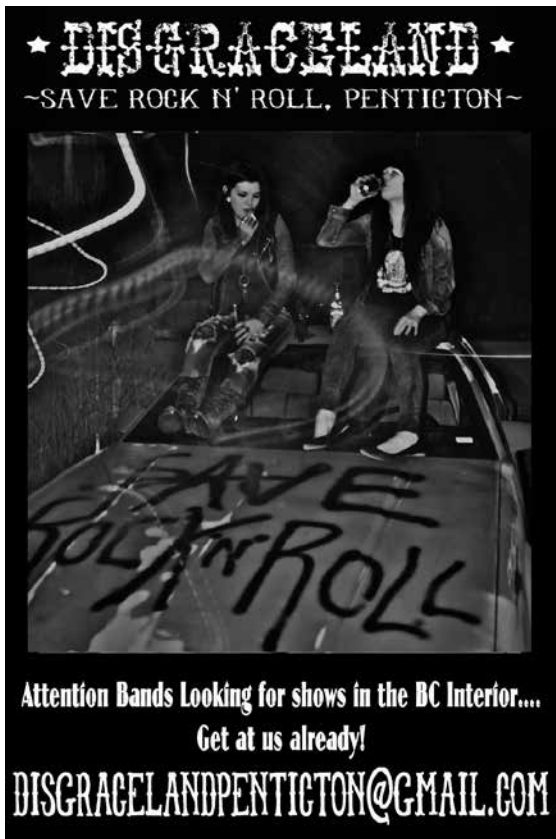
Any list that provokes people to think and re-kindle their passion is a good list.

AU: The book certainly contains lists of past glories by the greats... But what about the future? What do

you think is next on the horizon for the metal world? Do you have any hopes for the new generations of metalheads?

HA: Metal is alive and well and there will always be great new bands. People just need to know their roots and understand that not many, if any new bands are reinventing the wheel. It's 100% about the music and the performance of that music. There's no reason to believe that won't continue for years to come.

More information at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Merciless-Book-of-Metal-Lists>





a high-level and generally stellar lineup.

"My favorite act this year...it's [tied] between Joy, Xul, Dissimilis, Over the Coals or Holy Grail! Very talented bands... The whole line up is really funkin' good," he says.

Besides the music, there will be other festival-related

Armstrong MetalFest

By Willow Gamberg

Located in Armstrong, BC, the fifth annual Armstrong MetalFest takes place on July 19th and 20th. Featuring 30 bands over 2 days, this year's line-up boasts an impressive array of talent, from the visiting headliners Suffocation and Holy Grail to local BC and Canadian powerhouses like Bison, Archspire, Nylithia, Striker, West of Hell, Unleash the Archers, Tyrants Blood, Death Toll Rising and many, many more.

Festival manager Jesse Valstar is very gratified by how the all-ages festival has grown over the years, and by the reception it has received so far.

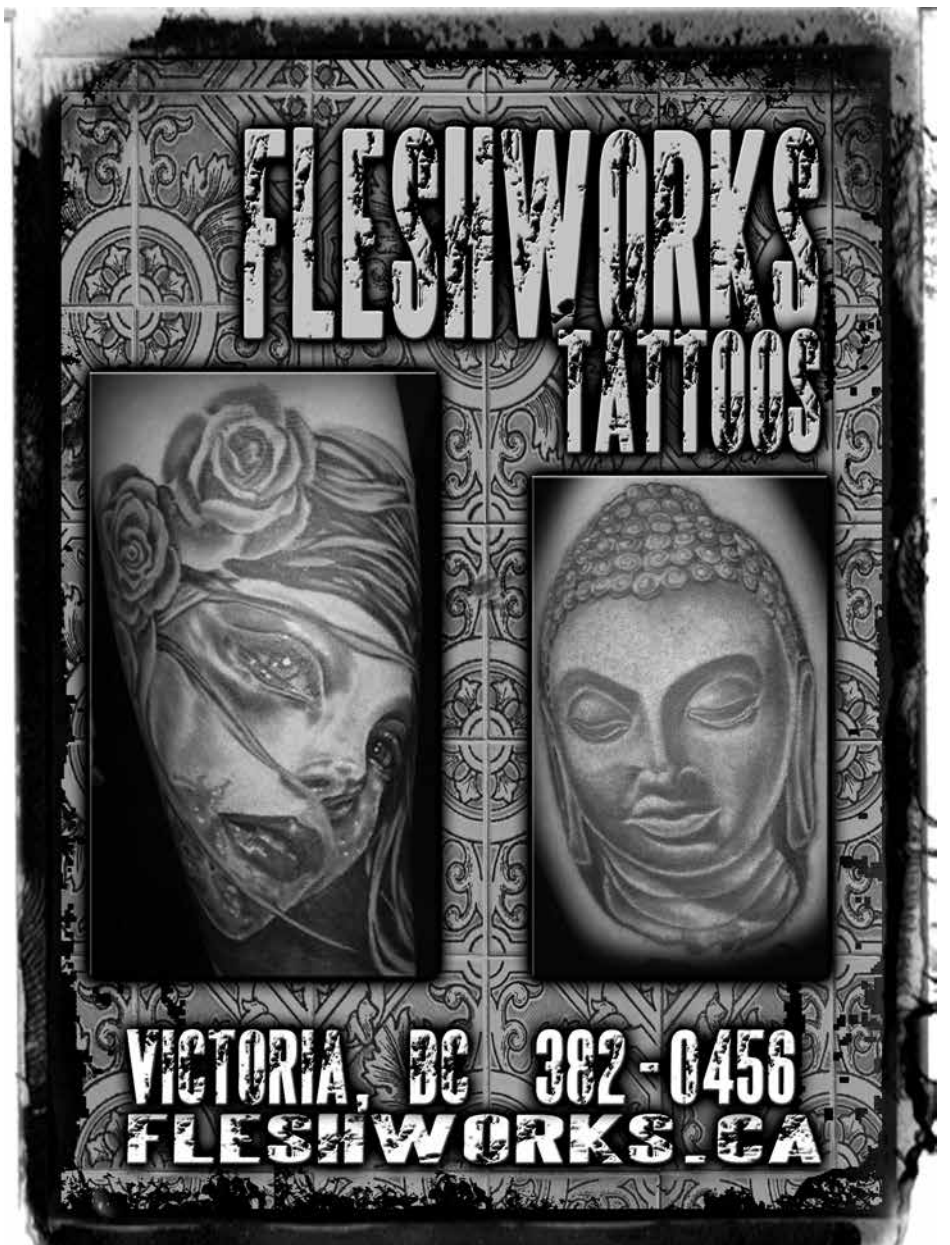
"It has gone from a couple of teenagers dreaming of having their own Wacken to a group of dedicated metalheads who volunteer a large amount of their time toward a festival which no one really thought would be possible," he explains.

Located about a day's drive from the cities of Vancouver and Calgary, Armstrong is located in the beautiful Okanagan valley and boasts a population of a little over 4,800. On-site camping is available, with amenities just a few blocks from the festival grounds; Valstar encourages attendees to drive to the Okanagan, park their cars and party the weekend away.

So far, he says, preparations for this year's Armstrong MetalFest are well underway and he expects everything to go smoothly, even with such

activities and attractions like vendors of food, T-shirts and metal accessories, a beer garden and even a parade...of sorts. "Bring a beer helmet made from beer cases and cans for the Pilsner Beer Helmet March!" says Valstar. "The winner of the march gets two free passes, Pilsner swag, and the Vinny Pilsner Cup to have in their hands till next year's march!" The Pilsner Beer Helmet March will take place on the Saturday morning at 10 a.m. For Valstar, the experience of putting on the Armstrong Metal Festival has been unique and positive. "It has been an absolute honour working with everyone in the Western Canadian Metal Scene," he says. "We have some of the best people to deal with when it comes to business and down-to-earth, good times! Thank you very much and I hope to see you all this year at AMF!"

Pre-sale weekend tickets include two days of music and two nights of camping, and are available in Kelowna, Kamloops and Vernon Rock & Smoke Shops, from Electron Sound and Percussion in Prince George, from Valley Hemp & Imports in Penticton, BC and in Vancouver from Scrape Records, as well as online through www.armstrongmetalfest.ca



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South of Heaven

A preview of the UVic Heavy Metal and Religion Symposium by Absolute Underground's Michael Luis

On June 7th and 8th, UVic is hosting South of Heaven, an all-ages symposium on religion and heavy metal. The event was spearheaded by Shamma Boyarin, a professor in the university's Religious Studies department, with the assistance of Casey Lazar, a third-year undergraduate student who formed UVic's first heavy metal club in 2010.

The club has over 300 members, hosting meetings every Friday for some of the more committed constituents. Boyarin approached him eight months ago about organizing the symposium. "He just got ahold of me and was like 'Hey, I've been working on this for a bit,'" says Lazar. "I'm submitting a grant application to an agency and I want your help."

The two have been working together since, with the final incarnation of the symposium materializing last month. The Saturday features lectures presented by professors, writers, and academics from both inside and outside of the university, and feature diverse topics such as Middle-Eastern metal, and Christian black metal. And after a day of filling one's brain with metal knowledge, there is no better way to unwind than some live heavy metal.

A Saturday-night concert features four of BC's most talented metal bands: Unleash the Archers, Nylithia, Scimitar, and Atrous Leviathan. With

some religious and historical lyrical content, the guys from Scimitar feel right at home contributing to the symposium. "Religious themes play a major role in many of our songs, especially on our first album, Black Waters," explains bassist/vocalist Angus Lennox. The album features an overarching concept of the war between Protestant buccaneers and Catholic merchants in the shipping business of 16th-century Spain. They also

have a newer song, "Flayed on the Birch Rack," which describes stories of the Iroquois people capturing and torturing Jesuit missionaries. "The perceived pacifist but intrusive nature of the Jesuits made them special targets of Iroquois scorn," continues Lennox. "One extreme example was a priest who was scalped and had boiling water poured over his head as a mockery of the power of Baptism." Of course, they're also stoked to partake in some old-fashioned face-melting.

While the Saturday lectures and concert are noteworthy, the previous day's event begs mentioning. Friday will see a screening of the critically acclaimed documentary, Global Metal. The filmmaker, Victoria's own Sam Dunn, will be doing a Q&A after the film. Dunn is a UVic alumnus, and through his television and film work has established himself as perhaps Canada's biggest metal authority. "He's a huge inspiration," says Lazar. "He's done so much for the metal scene around the world."

"I can only hope I can do a fraction of what he's done."

The concert is \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door; lectures are by-donation; and the screening is \$5 for students and \$7.50 for general public. Tickets can be purchased at The Absolute Underground Store.

More information at <https://www.facebook.com/events/114597062077364/> or on UVic's website at http://www.csr.s.uvic.ca/events/seminars_conferences/conferences_south_of_heaven.php

Absolute Album Reviews

Beyond Creation- The Aura Season of Mist

The current trend in hard music these days is to blend a multitude of genres in favour of a hybrid style of metal. Is it blackened death metal, neo-thrash or progressive technical grindcore? After listening to this album several times I would say it's predominantly centered within the technical death metal realm of existence, though there are countless moments that made me think my iPod is possessed and stuck on some form of demonic shuffle.

The track "Coexistence" even has a hypnotic, Tool-like breakdown with a fretless bass howling over top, playing lines that would make wolves congregate faster than the scent of a fresh kill. The musicianship is extra efficient and super tight, and by that I mean Germanic. Makes me think there is definitely some good reliable German death metal being passed around the ranks of this Montreal-based crew.

These guys certainly aren't faking it either; it takes a lot to master all the intricacies of this complex genre, which they have done with unique style. The extra helpings of instrumental prowess are a real eye-opener and the epic vocal bloodletting will leave you wondering if that thing that possessed Linda Blair in the Exorcist has found a new

conduit; though perhaps this time, there's a much more willing host.

-By Dan Potter

Shining- One, One, One Prosthetic Records

While listening to the latest release from Norway's finest cyber-metalists, I can just feel the zeros and ones coursing through my veins. Armed with a sound that could be described as arena-filling, industrial strength metal that is heavily reliant on a type of fuzzed-out Sabbath riffage, this band takes what they have learned from others and cranks up the intensity level until your head is ready to explode.

With the addition of scorching sax playing, it is clear this group is in search of something quite different than your average take on the eclectic metal genre. Amongst the din of buzz-saw-like electronic sounds, the image of a horn player really irks the dusty of thought processes. I kept envisioning fantastic vistas, like a lonesome human clone ripping up some brass under a street lamp on a colonized Venus.

None of these nine tracks veer into the realm of the unlistenable. If memorable, scream-y hooks are what the doctor prescribed, then you're in luck because any one of

these songs could be played on the radio next to MUSE or some other futurist rocker. But as "My Dying Drive" points out, hidden underneath all the melody lies something for seekers of the macabre; the kind of stuff only freaks like the people who ran the Little Shop of Horrors would enjoy!

-By Dan Potter

Streetlight Manifesto – The Hands That Thieve

Victory/Pentimento

Streetlight Manifesto is typically referred to as "ska-punk," but the band is so much more. The guitar upstrokes and frantic tempos are there, but it's the inclusion of other influences that makes the Streetlight sound one of the most refreshing, not only in the punk scene but the music world in general.

On The Hands That Thieve, the New Jersey seven-piece's third full-length of original material, the band pulls everything from its bag of tricks. "The Three of Us" features a distortion-heavy bridge in the realm of System of a Down; "They Broke Him Down" sounds like NOFX B-side before mellowing out to acoustic guitars and soft brass; and "If Only for the Memories" blends Latin flavour with melodic punk rock in a way that makes you want to both dance the calypso and start a circle pit.

And this album has hooks. I mean, holy shit does it have hooks! I approximate I'll have the chorus of "With Any Sort of Certainty" stuck in my head for the next 27 years.

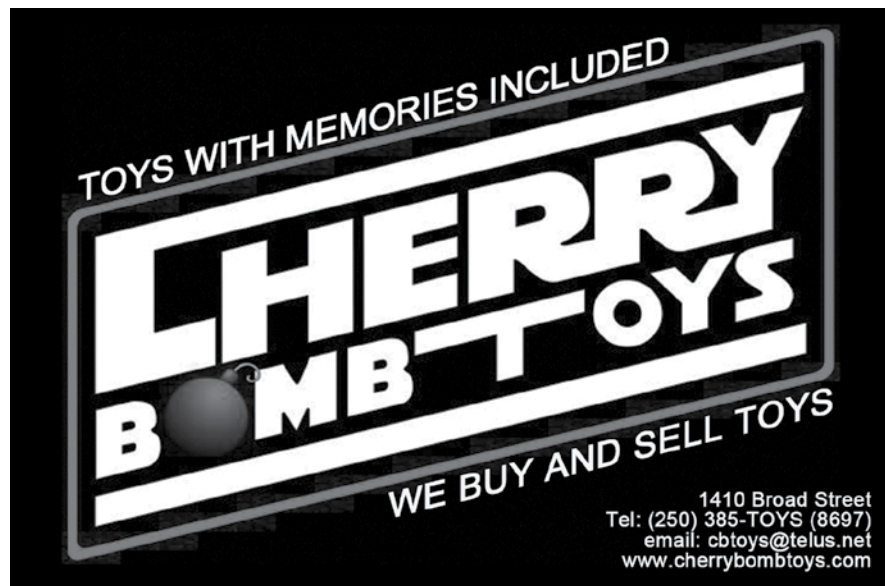
With an impeccable blend of various rock, Caribbean, Latin and Eastern European styles; catchy horn-lines and vocal melodies that will have you humming between each listen; and frontman Tomas Kalnoky's introspective lyricism, The Hands That Thieve is the current frontrunner for best punk record of 2013.

-By Michael Luis

The Dillinger Escape Plan – One of Us is the Killer

Sumerian Records

On DEP's fifth album, their first on the red-hot Sumerian records, the group continues to polish their already remarkable sound. The psychotic mathcore freak-fits that marked their early releases appear in full force, with the spastic first-single "Prancer" and skittering "Understanding Decay" carrying this torch, but it's the way they foil and blend this vibe with a melodic sensibility (such as the radio-friendly title-track) that makes



the LP stand out.

Every member is a virtuosic musician, with guitarist Ben Weinman and the gang showcasing their impressive instrumental abilities throughout, but it's never technical just for the sake of being technical. Every dissonant guitar tap or jagged snare hit serves a defined musical purpose.

Whereas the guitars and percussion shine, the most impressive performance may be that of lead-vocalist Greg Puciatto. He utilizes mid-range cleans, syrupy falsettos, throat-tearing growls and incomprehensible screeches. In many cases this happens all in the same song, providing a much-appreciated sense of variety.

The album is also marked by some left-field weirdness. Second single "When I Lost My Bet" features swing-jazz ride cymbal and angular scatty vocals, and random bird chirps and a brass-laden bossa-nova bridge find homes in the uber-catchy "Paranoia Shields." This Mr. Bungle-inspired zaniness can certainly keep any listener guessing.

Do we find out which one is the killer? Who cares? This is one of the strongest metal LPs of the year by one of the genre's most innovative bands.

The Ocean – Pelagial Metal Blade

The story of The Ocean is an interesting one. The band has had over 60 members contribute in its 13 years, the only constant being German band-leader and composer Robin Staps. However, with the same five members since 2010, chemistry has formed within the group, leading to Pelagial, one of the strongest records in recent memory.

Like The Ocean's past three releases, Pelagial (pr. pell-ay-gee-al) is a concept album. It takes the listener on an expedition from the ocean's surface all the way down to the dense abyss of the floor. The album is one uninterrupted 53-minute composition, broken into 13 titled movements. Musical ideas that

appear 15 minutes into the LP might appear 30 minutes later, creating a journey that obliterates any notion of verse-chorus-bridge song-writing.

In the same way that the ocean gets deeper, denser and darker as you travel down, so too does the album. Starting with airy tinkling keys and crisp guitars, it gradually brings listener into the depths, barraging them with goopy sludge licks, post-metal ambience, wacko proginess and machine gun blast-beats. If the disc just got slower and heavier, it would be boring. Thankfully, currents and waves circle and undulate, switching up the intensity and fostering diversity.

The album also comes with two versions. A vocal version features expanded melody carried by underrated singer Loic Rosetti's soaring cleans, as well as aggression added by his variety of growls. Then the instrumental version allows the listener to dissect the 288-track (not a typo) audio mix.

With two listening experiences and a fully-realized concept that would make Mastodon's Leviathan blush, Pelagial has proved that The Ocean is one of Europe's greatest exports. The first true masterpiece of 2013.

-Michael Luis

The Brains- The Monster Within Stomp Records

Ladies and ghouls, are you ready for the new Brains album? You'd better be, because here it is! Loud, fast and sweating blood from every pore, these Montreal psychos are back with a vengeance. Among the songs that especially stand out to me are "Misery", which has nice and chunky rockabilly guitar riffs with the power of a lawnmower, complete with a tighter-than-tight rhythm section composed of Pat Kadaver's consistent drumbeats and Colin the Dead's clacking stand-up bass. And the icing on the cake is Rene De La Muerte's haunting crooning and a chorus you'll want to sing along to immediately. "The Damned" is amaz-

ing too, with its musical changes throughout the song, including parts where the guitar starts and stops in a brusque manner. As can be witnessed in this album, variety is definitely the spice of life. "Bleed" has some lovely upright bass work in the middle which shows off what the instrument can do with plenty of panache. "Elektrik Shock" is insanely catchy and once again, you'll find yourself tapping your toes and singing along even if you don't know the lyrics yet. "Rest in Pieces" can only be described as epic psychobilly; images of classic horror movies like those pictured on the cover will flood your brain. "Cucaracha in Leather" is an amazingly well-done instrumental interlude which, to me, is reminiscent of Rev. Horton Heat. You'd better believe that's a compliment! "Devil in Disguise" and "Lies" will also have you shouting along with the chorus and shaking your culo if you happen to have a pulse. "Rolling Down" is love at first note, a song about the joys of the open road that instantly transmits that joy through music and lyrics. I must add though that I miss the songs in Spanish and French which also added something different to the mix. C'est la vie. But this is truly a solid work of horror punkabilly madness that is worth every cent in your moth-bitten pocket. The blend of punk rock, rockabilly, surf, Latin and whatever the hell else they're throwing in there is refreshing from the get go and will hold your attention till the last note is played. The absolutely gorgeous album artwork has to be commented on as well. It works perfectly with the music. Of course, you will always win me over with old school tattoo flash-inspired art and a cover that looks like a classic horror flick poster complete with a tattooed babe in a red 50s style bathing suit. Perfect! Don't wait another second and get yours today!

-By Anita Fixx

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Rob Willey

An Interview with a West Coast Horror Director

By Michael Allen

Rob Willey is the frontman and lead singer of the Victoria-based rock group Jell. Recently, Willey won "Best Director" for his video "Out of Your Head" at the Vancouver Island Music Awards in 2012. He has continued to work with the camera. In 2013, Willey



began shooting a feature-length horror film, titled Dark Cove, in Sombrio, British Columbia. Willey has encountered a few challenges during filming, which he talks about with Absolute Underground's Michael Allen.

Absolute Underground: For those who do not know of it, can you introduce fans to Dark Cove?

Rob Willey: Sure, it is a classic Canadian tale of five friends heading out to camp on the West Coast. They want to have a good time on their annual camping trip. And, essentially, they meet a British fellow and two Australian surfers. They indulge in some drinking and some partying, but the Australians turn out to be a little nasty. There is an accidental death, which leads to some of the mayhem that happens later in the woods.

AU: Can you describe some of the horror elements that viewers will find in this title?

RW: It is essentially a slasher film. There are some axe-murders, gory wounds and horrific images. There is a lot of horror in this title for fans of the genre.

AU: How does the film set itself apart from other horror and thriller films?

RW: We rely heavily on some very realistic dialogue in the movie. We have realistic and believable characters and locations, which look and feel right. We are not using just the prototypical horror set-up.

AU: We are up here in French Beach, British Columbia, just north of Sooke. The area is pretty wooded

and rugged. Are the characters equally isolated in the setting?

RW: Yes, definitely. There are some challenges in finding help, when the first body is discovered. We have used many of the natural settings in our shoot, as well.

AU: How far are you in the production schedule and how is the shoot going?

RW: Production is going well. We shot for 10 days in August, and got about half of the movie finished. We are doing this four-day shoot and another four-day shoot in August, to wrap it all up.

AU: What are some of the challenges that you have encountered during production?

RW: We have such a small crew. Everyone is essentially doing three or four jobs; everyone is multitasking. We have also encountered some challenges with locations. One of the reasons that this location works so well is because it is so terrifying and so isolating. It brings a dangerous realism to the picture.

AU: After the film is complete, will you be touring some of the local film festivals?

RW: We are definitely going to try for the Victoria Film Festival, down into the United States and into Europe, too. We have already had a couple of invites to horror film festivals: one in the south and one in Scotland.

ABSOLUTE HORROR

AU: Do you think you will be able to release the film in 2014?

RW: Yes, that is the game plan. We have already had a couple sales agents looking to represent the film.

AU: Where are you going to go next in the genre? Are you going to take on another horror or thriller film?

RW: We are planning to shoot another horror thriller. It will be more of a thriller this time, with more suspense.

AU: Is there anything that you want to let horror fans know about the film?

RW: If you are looking for a real nitty-gritty horror film that is professional-looking, with fun characters, then you should check this film out. We are going to take it to Cannes in 2014. We want to have that blood and we want to have that thrilling element for fans. So, we are trying to keep it real and we really want to represent the Canadian West Coast vibe.

For more information on Dark Cove visit the film's fan page: <https://www.facebook.com/DarkCove>

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Agnostic Front

Interview with Agnostic Front's Roger Miret

By Dustin Blumhagen

*Answers edited for length

Absolute Underground: You guys are coming up here to Canada for RockFest in Montebello, Quebec on June 14th (in addition to Western Canada in October). There are a number of great bands on there (Bad Brains, Discharge, Madball, 7 Seconds). Are there any bands on the lineup that excite you as a fan?

Roger Miret: I don't have the full lineup in front of me. I am pretty excited to see Flag. All of the other bands I think I have seen already. Bands like Bad Brains and Discharge are inspirational bands to myself.

AU: Agnostic Front is into their third decade. Do you get excited as a fan to see bands anymore?

RM: We tour a lot, so we get to see a lot of bands. You can see when a band is going to be one of those bands that are going to last the test of time. You can also see those bands that are in it because they love it currently at the time. Who stays around is the hardest part. Lots of people are in it because it's a fad or something that they want to be a part of right now, and then they grow up. I guess I never grew up. I love the passion about it, you know?

AU: When you are playing something like that, a massive festival with 50 000 people, is it different than playing a small venue like CBGB's?

RM: Of course I prefer the more intimate club shows. That is what this whole movement is about. I like those better, but I can see what playing these big shows is all about. There is going to be that one kid who never saw you that you are now introducing to a certain type of music or a movement. It's not bad to do it, but if you ask me, I would rather play clubs where there are no barricades, it's one-on-one, it's more intimate. That's where hardcore has always been.

AU: When I first ran into the name Agnostic Front, it was on an Epitaph sampler. I'd started listening to punk and you were my introduction to the hardcore scene. Do you still hear stories like that from kids today?

RM: Absolutely. This kind of music has always been music for the youth. The elderly people kind of grew up with it. The music is about youth rebellion. Our first album, *Victim in Pain*, if you picked that album up 100 years from now, it will seem as relevant to someone then as a kid right now as it was to a kid 30 years ago. When I wrote those lyrics, it was a time when I was questioning a lot of stuff. I was young myself, I was 17 years old and a lot of youth can relate to that stuff.

AU: You said you were a kid yourself on *Victim in Pain* and even though you say you haven't grown up, there is an obvious maturity that comes with living life. Do you feel that your growth is reflected in your lyrics?

RM: From then to today, of course. If you would

have known me years ago, my frame of mind was kind of act and deal with it. I used to be "live fast, die young", now I'm like "live slow, just cruise". I want to see my family; I want to see my grandchildren. Just enjoy life.

AU: Your latest album, *My Life, My Way* has the distinctive Agnostic Front sound, but it shows change from the *Victim in Pain* days. Some of the difference may be attributed to better production, but do you think about pushing boundaries on this album?

RM: No, we don't really think about that. Especially on an album like *My Life, My Way*. That album is kind of a collage of all of our last records. It has hints and bits and pieces of all of our studio records. It is a very mature record from us; it shows our maturity and art. It shows our differences and different styles we bring. To me, hardcore has always been lyrically more important than anything. What the message is, before the music. As time progresses and things move and change, we moved with the flow. Times change. We stayed current. We don't want to be that band that did that one record, quit and then came back to play that record and cash in, with nothing more to offer. I always say, if you are a band who did that, it's cool that you came back and did a couple shows, but if you can stay and remain at least minimally active, do the odd recording, show people that you are still relevant... that's the difference, passion and commitment.

AU: Everyone appreciates seeing live bands, or at least I hope they do. Hardcore music is loud, it's aggressive, it's perfect for the live setting. How do you guys translate that passion into an album?

RM: Well, we are currently working on our new album right now. We do it in steps. There are a good 14-15 songs that are mostly written music-wise. The guys give it to me and lyrically-wise we tweak stuff. Topics are not that hard for myself. I always allow the other guys to kick in on stuff lyrically, they are a part of the band, so if they want to express something they should have an outlet too. If I am in a deadlock, I will go to them and we can work together. But it's not that hard to come up with something to talk about. Just click on the news and look at what's going on. If that doesn't inspire someone to write, then I don't know what would. So much fucked up shit. So much oppression. We always write about overcoming oppression and control.

AU: We talked about the future, the next album, but do you have any long term plans for the band?

We never have any long term plans; we just go with the flow. As long as there's a demand for Agnostic Front, we will always be here. Even if we aren't here as a band, musically and spiritually we will always be here. My plans are just to enjoy life, play music, do what I love, meet new people who are on the same page as me, have a great time with new people and old friends. That's it for my mission.



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Jupiter Cannabis Shop

Interview by Jake Warren

I guess there's no such thing as a TYPICAL head-shop owner/manager anymore. In days gone by most of them looked like bikers, Freewheelin' Franklin or spaced-out hippies who just wanted to get high for free every day and balls to any customer who may have a real question about products. But in the last 20 years, weed culture and attitude towards 420 in general has relaxed and matured and with that, the retail landscape has morphed into something new and entirely

professional. Enter shop owner and manager Charlie Snow and chains of 420-friendly stores like Jupiter Cannabis Shop. After learning there was a new kid in town, Absolute Underground paid Charlie a visit and asked her a few

questions...

Absolute Underground: Where/when/how did your interest in 420 culture/lifestyle begin?

Charlie Snow: I started using the product when I was fairly young, back in my hometown of Calgary but had kept it very secretive. I was at an age where it wasn't something that you could openly advertise. I moved to Edmonton in 2002 to complete my last two years of high school. It took a while but I eventually met people from school, work and social events that indulged in

the product. After high school is when I moved in with a group of guys who were involved with the local music and tattoo scene, which allowed me to meet even more people with the same interests. We had this amazing plant that brought us together and allowed us to bond with one another, even on a small scale. Those times are when I realized what a beautiful culture and lifestyle it can be, no matter who you are. It's a lifestyle I have continued living so I can keep experiencing moments like those.

AU: How did u get involved in the retail side of this culture?

CS: My favourite shop back in Edmonton was Jupiter, I'd be there at least once a week. It had such a bright and positive energy inside. My friends and I loved going in to look at all the amazing items they had, as well as to pick up our weekly 'necessities'. I guess I made somewhat of a good impression because after time the owners became familiar with me and they offered me a position with the company. After a few months I had earned myself full-time hours and the management position. I've always enjoyed the social aspect of retail as well as the admin side of things. I was working at a place where I could be myself and have fun with our clientele. We took a sense of pride in the fact that we were knowledgeable with our products and I always loved learning about the history, politics and science behind the 420 culture. I knew early on in my employment that I had a passion for the industry and it was what I wanted to do.

AU: How did the move to Victoria happen?

CS: I'm a Pisces and love the water! Years ago, when I first started with Jupiter, I would talk about how one day I was going to move to Victoria and open a shop; even though I had never been to Victoria, I knew it was where I wanted to be. The owners of Jupiter had known of my plans from the beginning and wanted to help me make it happen- without them, I wouldn't even be here today. Jupiter appreciates the hard work, time and dedication that their long-term employees put in and they really want to see those people grow and be successful in life. So for the 5 years I worked at the Edmonton location, I paid off my debts, saved, planned and prepared for my move. In 2012, we reached the point we could say, let's do this!

AU: What's the Johnson Street reception been like?

CS: Johnson Street has been incredible. It really has that community vibe. Everyone who works on the strip knows one another and supports each other. It's the street that people come to

BUSINESS PROFILE



do their shopping on and they know that they are going to get what they are looking for. That's what it was like back home on Whyte Avenue. There were a lot of shops condensed into a small area and we all knew each other. Even the shops that were in direct competition would look out for one another. When I was opening the Victoria location I really wanted to be in an area that would provide that same energy, and I found it on Johnson Street.



AU: And what does the future look like for you and your business?

CS: The future is hazy (pun intended)... I like to take life day-by-day, but I've got high hopes (two puns, one sentence). What I can say about the future is that I hope to be enjoying my free time with my wonderful boyfriend, family, friends and puppies. As for the biz, I want to keep expanding the selection and provide people with great and knowledgeable service. I hope we can be a part of the movement to end prohibition, as well as help make it easier for medical patients to access the products they need. Eventually, I'd like to be able to open another location. I've got great staff and every day we want a memorable experience for everyone that comes in. Most importantly, I just want to have fun and continue doing what I love, no matter what the future has in store.

All the best to Charlie and her shop on Johnson Street in Victoria. She's one of the good ones.

More information at <http://www.jupitergrass.ca/shop>

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Absolute Live Reviews

Rebuild / Repair, R.C.D.P., Fight To Swill

April 19 2012

DV8 Tavern, Edmonton AB

This was supposed to be a four-band affair, but Calgary's No More Moments couldn't make it down due to transportation issues. Never one to cancel a show, we still had three great acts ready to give'er and give'er they did. Jimmy Punktured's new band, Fight To Swill, opened the show with another great performance. Punktured was a great band and Jimmy's songwriting prowess has always been apparent but Fight To Swill is a much more punk-sounding band and another great chapter for this fella. Bass player Colby Caustic compliments the songs a lot, giving F.T.S. a great technical boost; his playing reminds me of the UK Sub/hum/ans which is an overall excellent band on all levels but which I remember most fondly for the cool bass lines - thumbs up and looking forward to doing more with these guys. Colby and his girlfriend Nadja have volunteered their services for a DV8 poster team, so once again we are stepping up our game to the best of our ability to get some folks from the all-but-stagnant big room scene and into seeing some stuff that won't surface in that market for a while. The current kings of Red Deer punk rock, The Red City Drunk Punks, came down for this one and they are always a treat to have in the bar. Rebuild/Repair headlined this one and deservedly so - Randall and company are one of Edmonton's hardest-hitting live bands these days, fusing the unstoppable sonic attack of bands like Black Flag with the oozing riffability of Black Sabbath which, if you have done your homework, was probably blaring in the background of many a T.V. party when there was no Jeffersons! No Hill Street Blues! Etc. Rebuild/Repair has been doing what they should be doing at this point in the game, playing plenty of shows and getting out of town when they can to bring their music to a new audience. I think this band will turn heads wherever they go, because they are a rip-roaring good time.

-Rod Rookers

The Apollo Doctrine, The Astronomicals, Dystallis

420 show (April 20)

Dv8 Tavern, Edmonton AB

The turnout for this one well exceeded what Facebook was telling us, and I was glad to see that, because we have had all three of these acts before and each one is impressive. Dystallis are older guys than the other bands and they make it look easy, with a natural ability to crank out heavy, 70s and 80s-style hard rock. Derek, the singer/drummer is a long time friend of Jodie's and Dystallis used to play for us lots back when we were scrambling for bands to fill up the weekends. The unmistakable "old-schoolness" of Dystallis is a great thing, and in parts remind me of stuff like Danzig's phenomenal first album...they can kick it into high gear too, and Darren (guitar) and bass technician Jack (who most likely would have a background in skilled cover bands etc) went over nicely with the younger rock n' roll fans in the room on this return from what was close to a three-year hiatus. The Dystallis crowd was out in force too, which was a good leg-up for the other bands who are still more or less in the trenches until people smarten up and check out what they have to offer.

The Astronomicals are another great local band that has showed up on the DV8 scene lately, they do a good job of taking all of the things that we love about stoner rock and kicking it up a notch, which makes for a powerhouse on stage. Some

of these younger guys can really dish it out when they get rolling and the Astronomicals have plenty of twists and turns in their music which makes you want to stick it out and see what they do next...we do all kinds of music and guys like these are a breath of fresh air, and a very cool bunch of cats.

The Apollo Doctrine headlined this show and I believe that once some more people see what they are doing they are going to be making some big waves around here. Also leaning towards stoner rock and the raw energy of post punk garage kinda bands, with a bit of almost White Stripes-y innovativeness, it's punchy, cool-sounding stuff. I have rocked out to these guys a lot at DV8 and they're one of those hidden gems in town that I will make a point of booking with some bands that have a bit more of a draw...Apollo Doctrine is a tough act to follow, so I would most likely be keeping these guys high on a bill if not on top unless we had them supporting well-established touring acts. Not sure what "The Apollo Doctrine" entails...but I believe in what this band is doing and in my opinion, the sky is the limit. One of my favourite new bands on the DV8 talent roster.

-Rod Rookers.

Motley Crue, Big Wreck

April 22nd, 2013

Save On Foods Memorial Centre,

Victoria, BC

Mötley Crüe is a band that instantly makes you think of the legendary motto, Sex, Drugs and Rock n' Roll. Even though they have been around more than 30 years, the audience still expects a lot from a Crüe concert. Big Wreck was an interesting choice of opener; their unique rock was a real contrast to the hard rock of the Crüe. But it was interesting to see the Crüe bring in a newer band instead of just a band from their earlier years. The opening track, 'Big Wreck' was an okay warm-up, while 'Albatross' and a few other songs were powerful.

The main event, however, was terrific! They started off strong and kept it going the whole concert. Their first number was 'Saints Of Los Angeles', which was a nice song to open with, allowing for other hits and smaller songs to carry the show. They played a good mix of songs, including their latest, called 'Sex'. For many songs, including the new release, 'Sex', I thought they sounded better in concert than on recording. The crowd got to hear lots of old favourites as well, including: 'Girls, Girls, Girls', 'Shout At The Devil', 'Dr Feelgood', 'Same Ol' Situation S.O.S.' and 'Wild Side'.

The stage show was brilliant, it had a mixture of pure sexuality and a biker/downtown LA vibe with strip clubs, bike gangs and beautiful blond women all around. The Crüe marched right through the crowd on the floor all the way to the stage. Vince's voice is still very powerful but was obviously weaker on 'Dr. Feelgood' and two or three other tracks.

At one point, Tommy Lee came down and played a white piano on the centre of the stage for the ballad at the beginning of a song. One of the downsides was that Lee's drum coaster was not working, which was a bit of a disappointment. There was also no encore, which I felt really turned the concert around for most people in a negative way. The people there were really nice, however; the fans seem to be open-minded and very understanding. I feel that music brings people together and that's exactly what the Crüe did. Overall they put on a great show. I don't think I'd see the Crüe again unless I was a fan of the opener, too. But the show was amazing, I highly suggest you see the Crüe if you have

a chance; their concerts are powerful and well played out...
-Skylar

Anderson.

Scythia, Ironstorm

Wed Apr 24

DV8 Tavern, Edmonton, AB

This bill made for a great Wednesday night. Scythia has been playing DV8 since 2010 and they are one of those bands that came in under the radar and turned out to be one of my favourite bands to have on the stage. The opening band, Ironstorm, has members of Gatekeeper and the newest member of Scythia on board, so I was all ears when they started up. Ironstorm sounded great and they dished out a solid set of old-school-sounding metal with a wide range of vocal stylings. Singer/guitarist Cody Lloyd does the majority of the singing and mixes it up quite a bit, doing growls, screeches, high notes and even some epic ballad vocals in spots...it's not uncommon to see bands where there are two or more guys trading the vocal parts, but is pretty cool to get the same effect with one guy singing and playing guitar. Along with Gatekeeper it is good to see more of this kind of metal coming out of Edmonton, and the return of rock-based metal bands influenced by Judas Priest, Manowar, Iron Maiden etc...there's a lot of toe tappin' and headbanging going on, which I like to see. As I mentioned before, Scythia is among my favourite bands that I have been able to work with in the past few years. I grew up on Conan The Barbarian, Dungeons and Dragons, the animated versions of The Hobbit and Lord Of The Rings, Elf Quest and a lot of other fantasy related stuff, so Scythia is right up my alley. They blend a lot of medieval music into their stuff and they pull it off flawlessly... add in the leather armour, fur, warpaint and a bit of storytelling between songs and it makes for an awesome show.

Scythia's newest member, Jeff Black, was great on the keyboard and was pulling off a lot of cool stuff, backing up Dave Khan's epic leads and vocals. Along with Terry and Celine, the whole bunch are a treat to have in the bar, and Scythia will always be a fun and impressive act any night of the week in my books.

-Rod Rookers.

Wilt, Runeblade, Gatekeeper

DV8 Tavern, Edmonton AB

April 7th 2013

There is something special about having a black metal show on a Sunday, and this was a great show in my books.

Lately, I have been booking quite a few shows with Tsultor Eknagnal, who is the drummer for Runeblade and Morbis Infernus, and I have to say that he is one of my favourite new promoters since he started arranging shows at DV8. The first band of the night was Gatekeeper and they showed up pretty early. I was mopping the floor and listening to The Standells when they rolled in so I figured I would switch it up and throw on my favourite metal band, Manowar, and one of the first things I heard out of these great young metalheads was, "Hey dude, good call on the tunes!" Gatekeeper is fairly new, but I had seen some of the guys in the bar before for other shows. I was also pleasantly surprised that Tyson, who used to play in Minax, was in this band, and

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he told me that he was quite happy with the new project. I was very impressed with Gatekeeper, and around the third song I was on my way to the merch table to buy a T-shirt. It's tough to come up with the words to describe a band without comparing them to other bands, but I would say that the vocalist, Shorre McColman, put it best: "We sort of play epic 80s metal with a little bit of 90s influence"

Next up was Runeblade; I am also a big fan of these guys. Tsultor is a powerful drummer and the rest of the guys are great musicians. I don't claim to be Mr. Black Metal, but Runeblade reminds me a lot of Venom which is also in my top few metal bands, and that scrappy, almost punk-rock approach to mak-

ing music makes Runeblade an easy band to get into. I get a kick out of the vocalist too, because once they start up, he stays in character and does all of his stage banter like a nasty old black metal pirate, which is a lot of fun.

Wilt I had never seen before, but I hope to see them again when they are on the road.

They are based out of Winnipeg and are a little more of a heavy, sludgy, doom-y, atmospheric metal band. I had a few conversations with one of the guitarists, who also writes for the king of underground publications, Absolute Underground, and runs a record label in Winnipeg. He gave me a card but I forgot it at the bar or I would gladly be plugging his label in this article. [Editor's Note: Charlie

Justice of War on Music]

Getting back on track, the show was great and with Tsultor's current wave of black metal shows, I must say that the turnouts have been impressive. Although it is not the biggest of the Edmonton underground subgenres crowd-wise, this crowd is very supportive of their scene, and without bursting any bubbles, I can honestly say that these folks are some of the most pleasant and cool people I have met since I have been putting on shows in this barren Albertan wasteland.

-Rod Rookers.

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Bringing Fandom Together at Rue Morgue's Festival of Fear

Fan Expo Vancouver 2013

By Ed Sum

The future is very bright for Rue Morgue's plans to bring their show, The Festival of Fear, to the West Coast. The plan is to have more of a local connection from vendors and participants residing west of the Rockies. This year's Fan Expo Vancouver 2013 (FEV) guest roster included local residents The Soska Twins, Brad Loree and Ken Kirzinger.



Long-time fans, aspiring filmmakers and up-and-coming writers saw this show as an opportunity to interact with as many people as possible. After attending Loree and Kirzinger's panel about the men behind the masks, show attendee Santiago Cordero said, "It's a great opportunity for fans to get to know the celebrities they most cherish. And because we're writers, we get to see the actors' perspectives on how they play the characters. Plus, it's nice to know the stuntman's view of the industry."

Rue Morgue's Dave Alexander and Ron McKenzie were on hand to answer additional questions and facilitate some of the discussion panels. McKenzie revealed that this year was intentionally small, basically testing the waters.

"I'm incredibly happy with the turnout," said McKenzie. "We had no idea that there'd be such a strong horror fan base in Vancouver. And we definitely want to make this show a regular thing, to spread the disease if you will. That means



movie screenings, offsite events, etc. I think next year we can definitely do that."

With two great names from the States, Cassandra Peterson and Tom Savini, to represent this genre, even this famous make-up artist found being here a joy. "It's like being in an aquarium and watching a whole variety of fish swim by, because there are so many individuals here, there's many great costumes. It's eye candy," said Savini.

Peterson was unavailable for comment, but her recognition was very evident at her well-attended panel.

Even though Savini doesn't quite keep up with the current trends in horror films these days, he took the opportunity to point out the differences between what he likes and where the industry seems to be going. He believes the true terror lies with classics like Frankenstein and with what lies in each person's perception of what a good horror product is.

"It's changing constantly," said Savini, "It's not about the material being presented but about what's perceived in your head. That's what I enjoy in a horror product today."

When he was sitting side-by-side with up-and-coming mavens to the scene, the Soska Twins, his willingness to see what is new was equally important to take note. And for fans to see

the diversity in the type of horrors available to experience in cinema will no doubt be key to growing the Festival of Fear.

Jen Soska said, "The fans mean absolutely everything to us. However, the crazy thing is that I don't really see them as fans. They're more like friends. I love talking to them. My sister and I spend hours everyday online just connecting with them, so to call them a fan is crazy. Everything we do is for them, and as long as they keep watching their films, we'll keep making them."

Even Kirzinger and Loree find interacting with them important. They have done many conventions outside of their "hometown," but to have one just down the street makes for a different dynamic. Kirzinger thinks that having FEV involved in the local scene is terrific. People

can come to these shows to ask how he got started and get tips. He explained that stunt work was a dream of his ever since he was 15, and his perseverance is what paid off in the end, though sometimes a bit of luck pays off, too.

"I was interviewing for the stunt-coordinating job in Freddie vs Jason when they asked me about playing the character," said Kirzinger, "It felt very natural to step into the role of Jason."

Interestingly, Loree's entry to the stunt/horror scene—to become the next Michael Meyers—was a bit different. "I thought I was going to be the stunt double for the guy, but when they told me I was actually playing Meyers, the actor in me said, 'Brad, you have to do this.' I took the job and as they say, the rest is history."

The two are great friends and they support each other when they're being interviewed for the same film. If one doesn't get the job, maybe the other will. Plus, Kirzinger was instrumental in helping Loree take that first step into the industry. It all boils down to those creating those strong community ties.

That also includes how the Soska Twins got their start. They self-financed their breakout cult hit, Dead Hooker in a Trunk at the cost of \$2500. But by the time they started making American Mary, their parents mortgaged the house to be the first investors. Eli Roth championed their works very early in their career and thus began their meteoric rise. Now, they get to present side-by-side with luminaries like Elvira at Monster Fest in Australia about the role of women in horror.

"There so many times where people say that women don't have a place in the horror industry," said Sylvia Soska. "Some people thought women aren't funny and Cassandra always fought that. The fact that she can be so thoughtful and so considerate with a lot of people saying how much she inspires them is very cool."

Both Jen and Sylvia are honoured to be one of the up-and-coming mistresses of horror. "It's not really a boys' club anymore. Every male director that we've met is so supportive and happy to have us," said Jen.

Even the many guests attending Fan Expo



Vancouver for the Festival of Fear finds that the fandom in general is truly supportive for one another. Their passion and loyalty is what makes these shows worth going to. "I've not met one jerk in the horror fandom paternity," said Loree.



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Neüterhead: Ace of Spays Sends Heavy Music to the Rescue

By Alexis Baran



New charity group assists animal rescue groups with spay and neuter costs

It's no secret that metalheads and rockers love their animals, and who can blame us? Our cats, dogs, and other pets will cuddle us through the sweatiest hangover and they'll listen along to back-to-back albums of atmospheric metal first thing in the morning without a single complaint. The new charity organization, Neüterhead: Ace of Spays, is a way for people who love animals and who love heavy music to come together and make a difference.

Neüterhead was spawned from deep within the bleeding hearts of a group of music- and animal-loving friends, including two members of 3 Inches of Blood, along with independent pet store owners, and artists. Their goal is to address the problem of pet overpopulation by raising money to assist local animal rescue groups in spays and neuters. "Everyone who has pets should understand the importance of spaying and neutering animals", says Justin Hagberg, guitarist for 3 Inches of Blood. "We've gotten a very positive response from the rock and roll community because we're all like-minded people who understand the cause, and are also concerned pet owners who are taking the initiative to help spread the word." Rescue groups and shelters across metro Vancouver alone take in thousands of

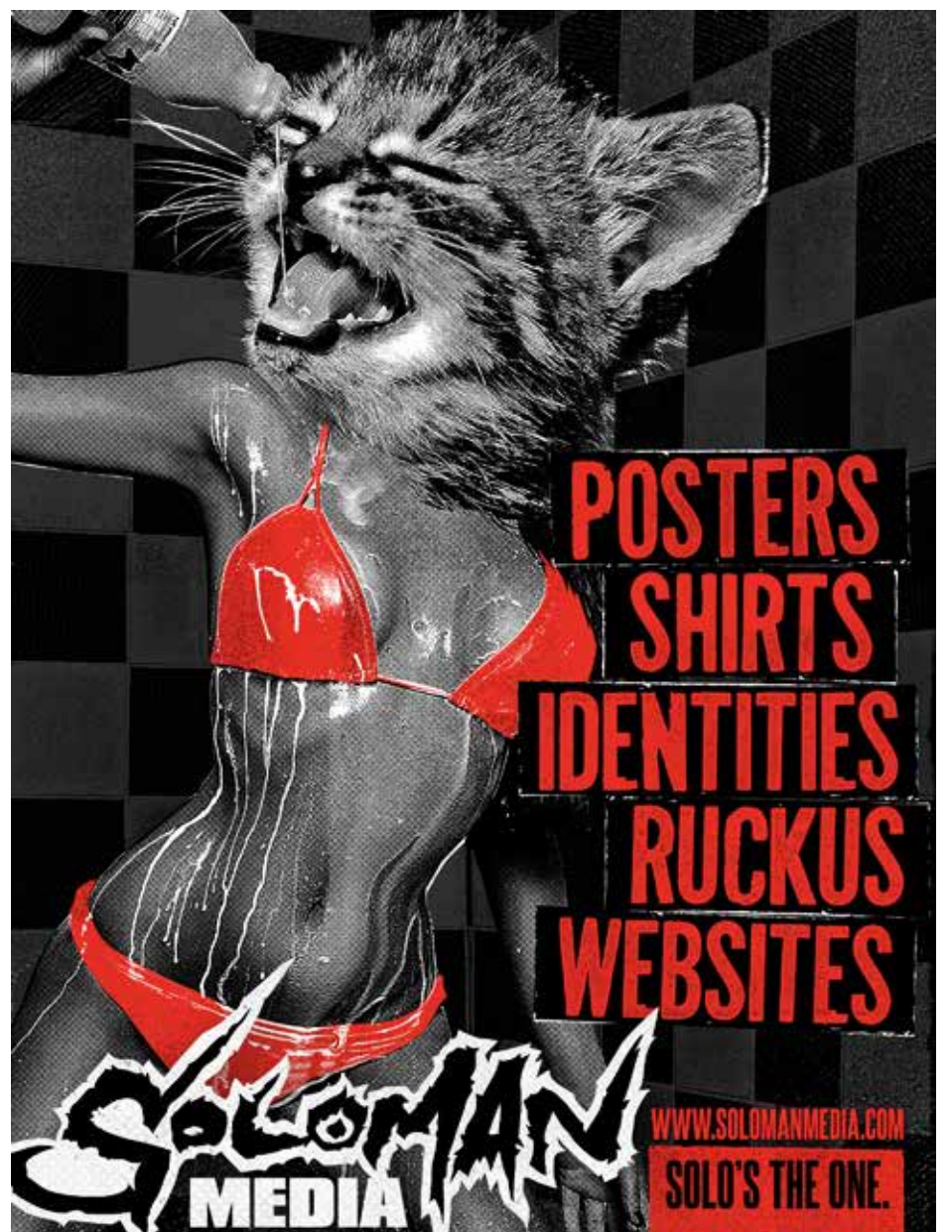
unwanted and abandoned animals every year. "You can think of it this way," says Shane Clark, 3 Inches Of Blood vocalist, "For every six new puppies a dog has, six other dogs may be killed in a shelter because no one wants them. There are only so many people who want pets, and making even more pets means that more

pets will be without homes, and then more pets will be euthanized." Far from the cutesy merchandise normally associated with animal lovers, Neüterhead has teamed up with artist Sam Turner who has designed album art for bands like 3 Inches of Blood and

Speedwolf, to create rock-infused t-shirts, beer cozies, and other useful wares. All profits from sales, events, and direct donations go directly to local animal rescue groups to assist with spay and neuter costs, and a different animal rescue group is chosen to receive funds every 6-12 months.

On Saturday July 13th, Neüterhead will be throwing a launch party at the Rickshaw Theatre in Vancouver, supported by Xanadudes (Rush by members of 3 Inches of Blood and Angry,) Pentagord (Pentagram by members of Baptists, Rotting Hills, Ancients, and Cooked and Eaten,) Ain't Vitus (Saint Vitus by members of Bison BC, 3 Inches of Blood, Haggatha, Goatsblood, and Grass City) and two more bands to be confirmed. The first rescue group to receive donations will be announced at the event.

Throughout their most recent North American tour, 3 Inches of Blood sold Neüterhead merchandise at their booth. "Neüterhead has been so successful on the road," says Hagberg, "Even the most menacing and barbaric-looking metal heads express their support and share their love for cats and dogs." Between the two of them, Clark and Hagberg have five adopted pets; Clark has two dogs named Chief and Blade and a cat named Yo-yo; Hagberg has a dog named Ulfi and a cat named Babytrix.



SUMMER HORROR FILM GUIDE

Camp Carnage

– Absolute Underground's Guide to Summer Camp themed Horror Flicks –

By Lacey Paige

My fascination with summer camp themed slasher movies stems from two things: my deep-seeded love for the horror genre and my unfulfilled childhood desire to attend summer camp. There are a lot of influential horror movies from the monumental '80s slasher era—and onward—that tell terrifying tales of young adults venturing out into the deepest, most ominous parts of the woods with a group of friends to get FUBAR. From there, we all know what ensues.

These movies are by no means brilliant works of creative, provocative cinematic genius, but they brought a lot of concepts and devices to the horror film chopping block that have stuck around through the proceeding decades of horror and have become some of the most recognized and arguably beloved clichés in the genre. Some of these titles persevere over others—offering up awe-inspiring special FX, mind-blowing climactic twists and quirky, fun characters—but the true essence of a superlative summer camp slasher flick is a really bad ass killer. Absolute Underground has compiled a list of some summer camp themed horror/slasher movies to teach you a few lessons on how to avoid being sliced and diced while camping this summer.

The Burning (1981) –

The Burning is, IMO, the golden nugget of summer camp slasher flicks. It features some superb killings and gore FX by Tom Savini; a roster of talented young actors that became fairly well established in the film and TV industry—including Holly Hunt, Jason Alexander and Brian Backer; and the most memorably grotesque-looking vengeance-seeking slasher to grace the silver scream (right up there alongside Jason Voorhees). It follows the summer camp slasher movie patchwork pretty well verbatim, without skipping a beat. But somehow, it's just... superior! And our star of the show, the horribly deformed Cropsy, stalks and stabs his victims with a giant pair of garden shears! The story follows the legend of Cropsy—an ex camp janitor who was seared to horrible disfigurement as the result of a cruel prank gone terribly wrong. After being released from an institution years later, he returns to the camp to wreak havoc upon the campers and the counsellors with that iconic pair of garden shears. And boy does he get it! Revenge—sweet, sweet revenge!

Camp Daze AKA Camp Slaughter (2005) -

One of the newer installments in the summer camp slasher sub-genre, Camp Daze (alternately titled Camp Slaughter) is a fun and unique twist on the traditional summer camp slasher ilk. Using conventional plot devices, familiar character types and a '80s summer camp backdrop, the first half of this film plays out in the most predictable manner possible. But things aren't as they seem... so we learn in the latter half of the movie. Four friends set out for a weekend of camping fun, but their car breaks down. After a chaotic night, they find themselves shaking hands with the lead counsellors of near-by Camp Hiawatha. These people seem way too chipper—and something about their clothes, hairdos and demeanours seems a little off... and by "off" I mean they seem as though they could be trapped in the '80s. Camp Daze offers a great amount of potential. It's unfortunate

that due to a limited budget, the production value suffered tremendously. But it's an enjoyable viewing experience once you get past the creepy cheese ball acting efforts of the main camp counsellors, and the nearly unbearable production restraints. There's a nice little nod to Friday the 13th at the end too.

Cheerleader Camp (1988) –

A group of teenage girls heads to cheerleader camp for the summer to hone their cheerleading skills—with the exception of one outcast, Cory, who is actually the team's mascot. The main girl, Allison, is a bit socially awkward and plagued by terrible nightmares of herself brutally murdering people. Her boyfriend, Brent, is a bit of a sleaze bag. He'll hit on anything with long hair and two legs. Allison refuses to put out which leads Brent to try and get it elsewhere. Meanwhile, at the camp, girls are getting picked off left right and centre—making it pretty difficult for the team to form a solid cheeramid. As Allison's nightmares worsen, she begins to believe that she suffers from split-personality disorder and that maybe she's the one who is murdering the other girls at the camp. Cheerleader Camp is fairly mediocre, but the end is pretty shocking and a bit disturbing as far as social norms go.

Don't Go in the Woods...Alone! (1981) –

Similar to the premise of Jeff Lieberman's exceptional summer camp horror flick, Just Before Dawn, Don't Go in the Woods balances out familiar slasher contrivances with those of the murderous backwoodsman sub-genre—mainly because the slasher IS a murderous backwoodsman... and an exceedingly nefarious one at that! The movie starts out as any summer camp slasher movie does: a group of 20-somethings heads out to the woods to do some camping. The leader of the pack lectures his group with a list of important rules to follow. The most important rule: DON'T GO IN THE WOODS...ALONE! This particular crew isn't the only bunch of quirky characters inhabiting these woods. There are several other random folks having their commune with Mother Nature rudely interrupted by the hulking man-beast clad in animal furs and mud, wielding a giant spear and rigging the forest with deadly booby traps. The kills are over-the-top, the blood and gore is plentiful, and the outlandish score is highly effective and complementary to our main star, the blood thirsty brute.

Friday the 13th (1980) –

The holy grail of summer camp slasher flicks, Friday the 13th spawned nine sequels, a massive cult following, numerous lines of movie memorabilia and fan garb, and a remake. It goes without saying that Friday the 13th is one of the most important and revered horror films of all time. Jason Voorhees, the goalie-mask clad, machete wielding mongoloid out for revenge against the camp counsellors that let him drown in Crystal Lake when he was just a wee lad, scored some award-winningly high body counts in the 30-year span since him and his dear mum first returned to Camp Crystal Lake in 1980. The series boasts some of the most creative, fun and well-constructed kills in the history of horror cinema. Several well-known actors first planted their star roots in the Friday the 13th franchise—including Kevin Bacon, Corey Feldman and Crispin Glover. Pretty well all of the sequels are great in their own right, although some are better than others. Part 5 throws a bit of a curve ball that provides a fresh spin on the series but is a major disappointment

for zealous Voorhees fans.

Just Before Dawn (1981) –

Five friends head up to a secluded mountain range to do some intense hiking. The leader of the pack, Warren, recently acquired part of the land. As they set off to hit the trails, the local authority figure warns them that it's not safe where they're going—but he doesn't go into detail about the dangers that await. Just Before Dawn balances a few familiar slasher movie devices with those of the killer backwoods inbred family sub-genre. It's genuinely dramatic compared to most summer camp themed horror flicks, and significantly less cheesy. It's more of a character study based on how the protagonists either succumb to weakness and/or death, or evolve into hard core survivalists than it is about an iconic killer and a body count.

Sleepaway Camp (1983) –

Brace yourselves for what is often deemed the most absurd ending in the history of horror cinema. This addition to the summer camp slasher catalogue is chock-full of overused horror movie clichés—tons of red herrings, some hilariously bad practical gore FX, mostly lackluster kills (water snakes, really!?) and copious amounts of teen sex hormones. These typical slasher movie conventions are interweaved with some absolutely bizarre dream-like sequences that reveal bits of the ghastly secret that is revealed just before the final credits roll. The mousy, socially inept Angela Baker goes to live with her kooky aunt and cousin Ricky after her family is struck by a terrible tragedy. Crazy Aunt Martha sends the two to camp for the summer. Campers and members of the camp staff are picked off one-by-one, some of their deaths more inventive than others (as is the case with most slasher fare). Several false leads as to who the killer is don't even come close to preparing viewers for the big climactic reveal. Sleepaway Camp is a must see for anyone who boasts an appreciation for the '80s slasher era; it definitely falls in the category of, "It's so bad it's great". And it's just so fucking bizarre!

Other camp-themed horror

movies to check out: Blood Lake

(1987), Cannibal Campout (1988),

Camp Fear (1991), Madman

(1982), Summer Camp Nightmare

COFFEEtration Camp

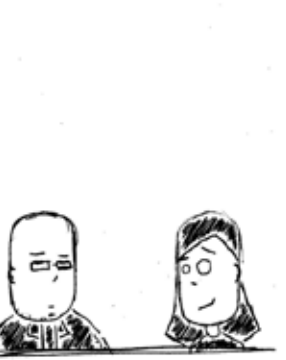


(1987), Terror at Blood Fart Lake (2009)

10th Calgary Underground Film Fest

From April 15th to the 21st, the Globe cinema was host to the 10th annual Calgary Underground Film Fest (CUFF). This year's fest had 28 films including some amazing documentaries, incredible narrative features and extreme midnight movies. All this and an appearance from the band Death made the 2013 Film Fest the best one to date! Attendance was through the roof, blowing previous years out of the water. On Monday the 15th, the fest kicked off with Big Ass Spider followed by the opening night gala across the street at Vern's bar. But if partying with the cast and crew at the local tap house wasn't your thing, the next film that played was Berberian Sound Studio. The week continued on with films like I Declare War and Jug Face, as well as Upstream Color. Thursday was the first of the midnight features which showcased No One Lives preceded by the new Troma short, Banana Motherfucker. Friday's line-up of films really proved that Calgarians can come out and support underground cinema, but with A Band Called Death, Frances Ha, Klip and ABCs of Death how could they not?

Saturday started off early in the am with 3 hours of vintage Saturday morning cartoons and all you could eat cereal. The theatre was overflowing with little kids and adults acting like little kids, all super excited for the cartoon extravaganza. All day long, the inside of the Globe saw overwhelming crowds showing up for films like Picture Day, Sightseers, How to Make Money Selling Drugs, I am Divine and finally the newest Rob Zombie flick, Lords of Salem. Before Lords of Salem, the new Astron-6 short Bio-Cop played to a crowd of very enthusiastic fans! The Globe had a bar upstairs



stocked full of beers and other drinks, while downstairs had a beer tub so patrons could enjoy a drink along with their movies. Some of the programmers had prizes that were handed out to lucky guests at certain films; all provided by a variety of the festivals sponsors. Death weren't the only celebrity guests invited to this year's film fest; a bunch of other films had either directors or actors or both showing support for their films running the festival circuit. Big Ass Spider had director Mike Mendez and actress Clare Kramer in attendance who both held a Q&A with programmer director Brenda Lieberman after the movie was over. Sunday had a few more docs and some narrative features along with the sold out 48-hour film challenge to wrap up an absolutely amazing year of underground films enjoyed by some hardcore film nuts. With a spectacular line-up, some really friendly staff and mass amounts of fans, this year's Calgary Underground Film Fest was easily my favourite I've ever been to and I can't wait until next year!

-Cody No Teeth

These Visible Scars Will Not Fade Away: A Movie Review

Visible Scars is an indie thriller, released in the middle of April. This title won "Best Picture" at the 2012 Shockfest and there is a reason why. This multi-genred film builds momentum as it moves through Acts II and III. Beginning slowly, Visible Scars draws the viewer in to a story of abuse, which later turns into murder; it is a compelling film, with an intriguing conclusion.

The story is dual in nature. The film begins with two sisters who are kidnapped by a psychopathic killer. They are raised in poor conditions, until their new home is destroyed by an accidental fire. The film then moves ahead several years. The second half of the story involves a new group of characters. Stacy (Jillian Murray) is a young girl who



is looking for peace of mind. She has recently been abused by her boyfriend, Brad (Jonas Fisch), so she seeks shelter in some local woods. Unfortunately for Stacy, these woods are now ruled by a bloodthirsty tour de force. Let the mayhem begin!

Some of that mayhem can be found in the film's wide assortment of characters. Viewers should try and spot the protagonist. Is there one? Instead of a hero or central figure leading the story, there are numerous minor characters introduced and removed often and quickly. The minor cast of characters are still multiplying well into the third act of the film and even ten minutes before the film ends. This is an unusual way to develop a story. Yet the narrative works by keeping events onscreen interesting, with all of these diverse personalities.

The film also pulls off a bait and switch in regards to genres. Visible Scars begins as a crime thriller. An early murder takes place and then a kidnapping, so viewers might be expecting a simple detective story to take place. But, at the midpoint of the film, the genre changes to horror, unexpectedly. The criminal investigation is mostly forgotten as more and more bodies turn up in some woodland. The gore increases along with the bloodflow and a few viewers might not know who is causing all of the chaos. There are a few surprises to be found in this feature, which is one of the film's more enjoyable elements.

This horror film fanatic would recommend this film to fans of indie thrillers, though viewers will have to be patient as Visible Scars takes a while to develop. However, the pay-off and ensuing chaos is well worth the wait. Visible Scars is a must-see that most will not forget.

-By Michael Allen





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